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RADICAL DISCONTINUITY

A STUDY OF THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE PERUVIAN
STATE AND OF THE INSTITUTIONS AND CULTURES OF
POLICY MAKING IN EDUCATION

Submitted by Maria Balarin

For the degree of PhD

From the University of Bath

2005

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with educational policy discontinuity in Peru. Since the early nineties, investment in education has increased leading to wave after wave of (truncated) policies and reforms. Results, however, have not matched expectations. Partly due to political instabilities, but, more generally, as the result of discontinuities in educational policy— changes in teams, processes and discourses. The problem seems to be one of an endemic incapacity on the part of the state, to bring about desired social changes: a radical form of discontinuity that raises critical questions about the role of public education in national development.

The present study aims to investigate these problems. It focuses on the issue of education policy discontinuity, and attempts to cast some light as to the origins of the problem and its radical nature. This opens the way towards considerations about the Peruvian state, the role of public education and prevailing conceptions about policy making.

The study has been carried out mainly through interviews with policy makers and other policy actors who have participated in the reform processes that have taken place since the early nineties. Theoretical explorations follow these actors' explanations about policy discontinuity, as well as their discourses about the policy process. The interview data has been complemented with documentary data as to achieve a more complete view of policy events in the period under study.

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PART I – THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION POLICY DISCONTINUITY

CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

In the past decades, Peruvian education has been on the spotlight of political and policy discourse in the country. At least since the 1970's, when the military government of Juan Velasco Alvarado proposed a thorough reform of the education system, improving public education has been one of the leitmotifs of political campaigns. This notwithstanding, Peruvian education, particularly, although not exclusively, public education, has steadily declined. Quality indicators coming, among other sources, from national and international assessments, are well below desired standards. This is alarming for the country's possibilities of economic and social development, and it raises serious questions of equity; as the limitations faced in public education contribute to the reproduction of existing inequalities.

Since the early nineties, investment in education has been on the rise, especially due to the constant influx of international loans, and also through some increase in the percentage of the country's GDP that goes to education. Wave after wave of (truncated) policies and reforms have swept the public education system to address its weaknesses. Results, however, have not met expectations. Partly due to political instabilities, but, more generally, as the product of constant discontinuities – changes in policy teams, policies, discourses, etc. – the worrying situation of Peruvian education has remained much the same. Beyond specific changes, the problem seems to be one of an endemic incapacity on the part of the state, to bring about desired social changes due to a radical form of policy discontinuity that raises critical questions about the role of public education in national development.

The present study aims to investigate these problems. It focuses on the issue of education policy discontinuity, and attempts to cast some light as to the origins of the problem and its radical nature. This opens the way towards considerations about the Peruvian state, the role of public education and prevailing conceptions about policy making.

The study has been carried out mainly through interviews with policy makers and other policy actors who have participated in the reform processes that have taken place since the early nineties. Theoretical explorations follow these actors' explanations about policy discontinuity, as well as their discourses about the policy

process. The interview data has been complemented with documentary data as to achieve a more complete view of policy events in the period under study.

Details about the research design are provided in the methodology chapters. For now, I want to turn towards the focus of the study: the issue of policy discontinuity.

Many times, when I have tried to explain the topic of my research, I have come across comments suggesting that policy discontinuity is something rather obvious. Obvious in policy making in general, and not only in the case of education, and especially obvious in the context of Peru and other developing countries. For a while, this used to make me anxious. To be honest, it was not until the late stages of my research that I became more comfortable with the topic and stopped wondering whether it had been mere stubbornness which had made me to stick to it. As this has been often raised, I think it might be useful to begin this introduction with some notes on the subject.

About the apparent obviousness of discontinuity I cannot but agree. It is a constitutive element of any policy process – especially when the political (negotiable) nature of policy making is considered. Besides, in the case of Peru, and even more in the case of education, discontinuity is also seen as an obvious matter. It is a taken for granted issue that causes no surprise. So the point is: what is there, what can be found or thought in relation to such an obvious matter? If the obviousness of something lies in its being clear, perceptible, and therefore susceptible to being ‘taken out of the way’ – as the etymology of the word indicates – then why dedicate a whole research project to studying it? Why put it *in the way* of our considerations about education policy making?

Before going into the obviousness (or lack of it) of education policy discontinuity in Peru, let me just take a brief detour into the more general meaning and possibilities that the obvious raises. The taken-for-grantedness of the obvious tends to imply that little consideration is given to it. This involves considerable dangers, as much of what we take for granted as being natural and obvious is indeed the product of not so necessary or evident dynamics. In this way, social practices whose existence

appears to be entirely evident can be shown to be the outcome of often arbitrary criteria that involve the concealment of other possible states or situations¹.

Contemporary philosophy has shown that even the most accepted – the most *obvious* -- of our interpretations, do not follow a necessary or univocal logic. They can always be opened up to a play of signifiers that lead in new, sometimes more illuminative or empowering ways. So we might want to reconsider the idea that the obvious requires no further explanation and can therefore be taken out of the way. This implies taking some distance from what appears to occur naturally, and making the obvious strange, puzzling, in need of questions. Such a move creates the possibility of re-examining a phenomenon in spite of its obviousness, to try to understand the processes that have led it to become natural.

In the social sciences in particular, where the possibility of discovery is somewhat more limited than in the natural sciences, much of the possibility for development seems to lie in the capacity of recasting social problems in new ways, as to make the obvious problematic. By re-framing or re-symbolising social reality through new theories and interpretations new possibilities of thinking and acting upon it open up. It has indeed been suggested that much of the contribution that can be made by the social sciences consists precisely in making social problems visible. And this, as we have seen, is not only a matter of identifying new problems but also of re-casting the obvious in new ways.

Now, going back to education policy discontinuity, the obviousness of this problem comes through in many ways. On one hand, discontinuity appears to be a constant, necessary and even desirable element in policy making. It suggests change, which is fundamental for adapting policies to new situations and demands. So it is obvious for policy in general. On the other hand, discontinuity, particularly when it manifests in the radical ways in which I suggest it does in the case of Peru, seems to be a trait of incipient state apparatuses like those of developing countries. It could be argued that state institutions in such countries are weak, as are the mechanisms that would guarantee the delivery of policies. So discontinuity is present in any policy sector, not only in education, and it is a constitutive element of policy making in countries like Peru.

The obviousness of discontinuity, however, opens up a series of questions when considered in more depth. Changes in governments and policy making teams hinder

¹ This is the kind of analysis in which Michel Foucault engaged, thus showing that taken for granted practices such as those of the modern prison, or the definition of mental illness, were the outcome of rather contingent processes led by not so overt power dynamics.

the application and development of policies and programmes over time, producing a kind of zero sum game that leads to inaction in spite of the permanent action that is involved in the constant redefinition of what needs to be done in Peruvian education. This is another aspect of the obviousness of discontinuity. If what we have is indeed the prevalence of obsolete educational practices (both at the level of teaching and of the system's administration) then it would seem that continuity and not discontinuity is the central problem. However, if we take this view on its own – rather than as the flipside of discontinuity – we run the risk of leaving some fundamental problems unconsidered. The reading I propose is, rather, that under the guise of permanent change in policies, the reality of Peruvian education remains the same, untouched over time, and reproducing existing social inequalities. But this, rather than lead to a dismissal of discontinuity, calls for more detailed attention of the problem.

Beyond the factual changes in policy discourses and teams, discontinuity points towards a more fundamental problem: the state's incapacity to come up with a direction in which to steer a sector like education. Education policies are caught in a kind of permanent metonymy, whereby any signifier (any policy) immediately slips into another, thus impeding the minimal fixation of policy discourses that is necessary to guide concrete actions.

Although, as will be shown, discontinuity in Peruvian education policies is highlighted as a problem in the discourse of various policy actors, it remains largely under theorised. Here lies the contribution of this study.

The focus on discontinuity opens the way for various levels of considerations. Through the research three complementary readings of the problem have been developed. A first reading is based on considerations of the characteristics of the Peruvian state that show the problems at the level of the institutions of policy making. Here the problem links education policy discontinuity with more widespread problems in the state apparatus, which has not developed the capacities to steer social changes – this, largely due to a lack of social integration that weakens the legitimacy of the state.

Another reading considers the 'cultures' of policy making that arise in such a context, and which, it is argued, help reproduce the weakness of the state in relation to the education system. From this perspective discontinuity is linked with more idiosyncratic dynamics, in which policy makers – only loosely constrained by institutional mechanisms that might otherwise require them to give reasons for their

actions – strive to imprint their own mark on education policies rather than implement changes within a framework of continuity or directionality.

These two readings are framed by a broader one that links considerations on the development of the Peruvian state with the development of the public education system. Discontinuity, from this perspective, is linked to the lack of articulation of public education to a project of national development, a problem that, on its turn, leads back to the inequalities that have prevailed in Peruvian society throughout the development of its state.

Through these readings policy discontinuity is reframed, redefined. In the end, discontinuity speaks of the existence of certain fundamental problems in dominant conceptions and practices of policy making, and some even more fundamental problems in the operation of the state apparatus.

The latter idea helps situate the study of discontinuity. The problem opens the inquiry into the *processes* rather than the *content* of education policies. In this sense, the ideas advanced through the study can be relevant beyond the realm of education. With this in mind, however, it will also become apparent throughout the following chapters, that the problem of discontinuity has particular connotations in the case of education. This relates to what was said above, that is, to the role that public education, or education more broadly, has played in Peruvian development.

The study of discontinuity aims to contribute in the direction of a more complex theorisation of education policy (Ozga in Vidovich 2001), seeking to understand the difficulties that emerge during the definition of policy problems. In this sense, the present study stands within a tradition inaugurated by Stephen Ball, which seeks ‘to capture the messy realities of influence, pressure, dogma, expediency, conflict, compromise, intransigence, resistance, error, opposition and pragmatism in the policy process’ (Ball 1990:9). This constitutes a move away from the tendency to provide ‘tidy generalities’ when accounting for education policies.

The work has been organised into five parts, each consisting of a series of chapters. The first part has an introductory character. It aims to situate the problem both in terms of my interest in it – the origins of the research – and in terms of the relevant literature. It also aims to give the reader some background on Peru, its social and

economic characteristics, and on the characteristics of the Peruvian education system. At this stage the aim is merely to situate the reader in relation to the problem and its context – a more detailed discussion of some of the issues presented at this early stage, especially of the policy events that have characterised the period under study, will be found in later chapters.

The second part provides a detailed discussion of the research methodology. It begins with an attempt to present the epistemological considerations that have guided the research process, and then goes into a discussion of the process itself, the research design and the choices that have been made throughout.

The third part presents the theoretical underpinnings of the research. This is not merely a review of relevant theoretical literature, but the outcome of the research itself. That is, the theoretical underpinnings of the proposed analysis have been developed together with the analysis. Here, a first reading of discontinuity is proposed. It stems from the discussion of the Peruvian state and the role of the education system therein.

Having set the theoretical background, the fourth part presents the analysis of the empirical data. It consists of three different sections: the first discusses education policy events during the period under study and sets the background for the next two sections; the second presents one reading of discontinuity that focuses on the institutions of policy making; while the third presents a reading in terms of the cultures of policy making that prevail in the country.

The fifth part serves as conclusion to the study and aims to put together the readings and theories of discontinuity. The discussion of the meaning of discontinuity moves onto considerations of policy making as a deliberative process and of democratic politics more broadly.

CHAPTER 2 - BEGINNINGS: ON MY INTEREST AND MOTIVATIONS TO STUDY EDUCATION POLICY DISCONTINUITY

'all knowledge is marked by its origins (...) [T]o deny this marking is to make false claims to universally applicable knowledge which subjugates other knowledges and their procedures' (Rose 1997:307)

My motivation in focusing on the issue of policy discontinuity can be traced back to my years working in the Ministry of Education of Peru. As a young philosophy graduate being part of a 'strategic planning office' that was in charge of developing major changes in the education system seemed like one of the best possible opportunities. The excitement of my first year in the Ministry at the possibility of participating in such a reform process was soon to experience a disappointment, as I faced the difficulties of working in one of the country's largest bureaucratic organisations. Internal organisational dynamics, political processes and external demands considerably limited the development of ideas and policies. On the other hand, what I now understand as a technicist and largely undemocratic attitude on the part of many ministry officials², seemed to lead to the dismissal of more open discussion of policies and reforms, especially with other members of the education establishment like the teachers. And this seemed to weaken the development and sustainability of policies.

During my last year in the Ministry of Education, and after a rather stable ministerial period, a new minister took over. The change in ideology – and consequently in the culture of policy making - was radical. It gave way to an internal battle between those who wanted to defend reforms and those who, not for any apparent 'educational' or 'policy' reasons, but rather for reasons that had to do with electoral and personal gains, wanted to introduce changes in policies. Soon the new minister began to change heads of office and leaders of some of the major reform programmes. This took place with very little coordination between incoming and outgoing officials, and therefore had important effects on the development of policies, as conceptions started to change, sometimes abruptly and sometimes more slowly. Observing and participating in this process sprung a series of mixed feelings and ideas which at the moment I found very hard to account for.

² The reasons why should become clear in the course of the thesis.

I left the Ministry at this time. It was a period in which morale was low. It was 1999, a time when the government's corruption was becoming more widespread and less covert; the time when president Fujimori came out with the concept of the 'authentic interpretation of the law' that allowed him to run for a third election, although the constitution stated that presidents could only govern for two consecutive periods; the time when much of the media – later found to have literally sold their editorial lines to the government – were supporting Fujimori's government and colluding with it to hide corruption acts and human rights violations.

In my case, disappointment soon gave way to questioning. How is it that something like this can happen? Why does the country tolerate the prevalence of such antidemocratic practices not only at the macro level but also at the level of decisions making in a sector like education? To what extent were the people in the Ministry, myself included, responsible for this? How did the Ministry as an organisation contribute to the possibility of changing policies and programmes by not promoting and engaging in discussions of alternatives? How does one control the abuse of power by policymakers who have no willingness to account or give reasons for their choices? How does one change this? Is it possible to change it?

I think these questions, such feelings of frustration and demotivation, and the problems that lay behind them, gave rise to this study. This was a moment when, to use Clark's (2003) expression, the play of language, of my own personal experience, opened up to 'the play of the world', to the intricacies of education policy making. I was faced with the problem of discontinuity, although at the moment it was still a very fuzzy and ill defined problem.

My questions initially led me to focus on the interplay of psychological and organisational elements that I thought were at the root of many problems. Organisations, I had come to realise, can be dysfunctional, and individuals working in such contexts can often become dysfunctional themselves, sometimes working more to preserve positions and sustain petty-powers, but more generally just losing sight of what they are meant to be doing – which in this case was the development of education policies. Conflicts between policymakers often seem to guide the course of actions, and individuals appear to cling to their ideologies making deliberations and negotiations over alternatives almost impossible.

I explored these issues during my Master's studies in psychoanalysis, which had a particular focus on groups and organisational processes. Here I considered the nature of the tasks that the education sector has to accomplish, and began to

develop the idea that the lack of articulation of public education to national development had a lot to do with what I later came to call 'policy discontinuity'. At this point it became clear that the problem – a problem that I knew of, or rather sensed was there, but couldn't yet describe in precise terms – required a more sociologically minded analysis. Understanding what was going on in the field of education policy implied understanding the socio-political system that frames education policymaking - that is, the set of institutions that regulate policy making as well as the role of education in relation to the Peruvian state.

Before starting the PhD I went back to Peru and worked as a research assistant for a year. In one of the projects I was involved in, which was a comparative study of curricular practices in Latin America, I came across various comments and indications that suggested that the way in which policies are made – in this case the discontinuities in policy making - affects the possibilities of achieving desired changes. The constant redefinition of curricular matters, for instance, bred inaction. People that were interviewed for this project often mentioned 'the way in which things are handled' by policy making authorities as a major problem, but it was a kind of 'taken for granted' issue that nobody stopped to consider in-depth – the kind of issues that we tend to take for granted in developing countries, like corruption, for instance. Similar problems were mentioned in other countries in the region, but, again, as I have shown in the previous chapter, were not being addressed by existing research, which tended to focus on the content or discourse of education policies, rather than on the policy process itself, and mentioned problems in policy making as a kind of background description to the analysis of substantive policy issues. Here, once again, I was faced with the problem of discontinuity and the need to study it.

This is the path that led the way to my PhD research. What exactly was I looking at I did not yet know, and it was only later that I would come to use the term discontinuity to refer to the research problem.

CHAPTER 3 - DISCONTINUITY AND CURRENT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH TRENDS IN LATIN AMERICA

In the following pages I will attempt to situate the present study within the existing body of educational research in the Latin American region.

Two of the most comprehensive reviews of educational research trends in Latin America (García Huidobro *et al.* 1989; Rivero 1994) are based on what is probably the most fundamental source of information for educational researchers in the region, the Latin American Educational Information and Documentation Network (REDUC). The growing body of literature that is reviewed and stored by REDUC makes this a necessary starting point for educational researchers in the region. Together with the work of other institutions such as the regional office of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) and the Partnership for Educational Revitalisation in the Americas (PREAL), among others, it offers a comprehensive view of the region's main research trends.

It is interesting to note that in spite of the span between their work, both Rivero and Garcia Huidobro show a strong preoccupation with the way in which educational research relates to policy practices. This may be indicative of the overall applied character of educational research in the region, which has to do with the scarcity of funding in most countries for independent academic research. As Rivero notes, most research is carried out by research institutes – rather than academic institutions – which often operate in the context of broader programmes or institutions that have specific, and generally applied, research agendas – making independent academic research somewhat of a rarity.

In the case of education policy research, more specifically, this makes a large number of efforts fall within what Codd (1988) defines as analysis for policy – rather than analysis of policy. A search in REDUC's extensive database for policy related research throws an overwhelming number of evaluative and diagnostic studies, as well as 'state of the art' studies of regional or national education policies. The applied character of education policy research thus accounts for the existence of more substantive – although largely descriptive – studies which tend to lack theorisation. This is particularly so in some areas of the region, with certain countries like

Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Mexico and to some extent Colombia dominating the production of more academically minded research³.

Thus, although both Rivero and Garcia Huidobro highlight that the value of social research should not be found in its applicability but on its capacity for 'making a problem socially visible, or for providing new categories for thinking about observed problems and acting upon them' (Rivero 1994:87) this task, particularly in relation to the second idea, is insufficiently fulfilled by existing research. As well as being the consequence of the applied character of most research, this could also be explained by reference to the research models that appear to predominate in the region. Rivero (1994) suggests that research has 'made use of theoretical models with little explanatory capacity, and there is a lack of interdisciplinary approaches and of adequate scientific instruments' (p.84). Although he argues this on the basis of a study done in 1987, much of the now available body of literature is still amenable to the same critique, especially in what it says about the explanatory contributions of research. Apart from their applied nature, studies tend to be descriptive in character and follow approaches which do not usually lead to theoretical development - a trend that also reveals the prevalence of empiricist research approaches in the region. This, of course, is a generalisation that refers to the broader body of literature and does not deny the existence of some more theoretically oriented research.

3.1 TRENDS IN EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH: THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW RESEARCH AREA

A closer look at the more recent education policy literature shows important efforts to understand (and not only describe) the nature (and not only the impact) of existing education policies. The larger body of literature is made of substantive research into specific policy areas and attempts to analyse the impact of reforms⁴.

There is, however, a growing number of works focusing on education policy discourses (see Ball *et al.* 2003). This trend can be located within a more generalised move away from the technicist analyses of policy (which focus on diagnostics, implementation, evaluation, etc.), to more critical analyses that discuss

³ Research production is considerably higher in these countries and the literature is considerably skewed towards analyses of the policies in them, with references to countries in the Andean region, for instance, being scarcer. For some examples see (Ball *et al.* 2003) or a recent number of the Journal of Education Policy (2001, vol. 16, No. 6) dedicated to the discussion of policies in the region.

⁴ PREAL for instance, promotes studies in each of its work group areas (standards and assessment, teachers' professionalisation, teacher unions, decentralisation and school autonomy).

the implications of policy discourses and agendas⁵. In the case of Latin America such research tends to focus on the more recent 'quality reforms' of the nineties which followed the eighties period of 'expansion' reforms (aimed at increasing provision of educational services). A large part of this literature is concerned with the influence of international agencies such as the World Bank, the IDB, UNESCO on the formation of policy agendas (see Coraggio 1995; Fischman *et al.* 2001; Morillo 2002; Narodowski *et al.* 2003; Reimers 1991; Torres 1999).

Within the literature that discusses education policy developments there has emerged in recent years a body of material that is more specifically relevant for the present study. The latter, which can be broadly characterised by its focus on the politics of education policy making, highlights the need to focus on the processes and not only the content or discourses of policy making. In this sense, I would like to argue that the present study of discontinuity lies in the context of an emerging (although still not well consolidated) area in the region's educational policy research agenda.

The development of this new area in the literature has a common origin in reflections about reforms focusing on improving quality in the region, which suggest serious problems in the management of policy processes. With some exceptions, the political context in which reforms have taken place, which in many cases has been characterised by instability and institutional weakness, appears to have considerably undermined the development and sustainability of reforms. In a review of Latin American education policies, Martinic (2001) argues that apart from questions related to the content of reforms or the models that they have based on, researchers have called attention to the 'processes of administration and implementation of reform policies' where most countries have faced serious problems. This suggests that the problems discussed in the previous section in relation to the Peruvian case, where policy discontinuity appears as a serious hindrance to policy making attempts, are somewhat more widespread across the region.

A series of publications demonstrates this new focus in education policy debates. A look at the opening papers in Martinic and Pardo's (eds.) (2001) 'Political Economy of Education Reforms in Latin America', for instance, is enough to identify that the major concern of the book is to understand the way in which political phenomena impact on the possibilities of education reform and policy making more broadly. Grindle (2004) and Corrales (1999; 2002) – whose contribution I will analyse in more

⁵ A discussion of these perspectives can be found in chapter 9

detail below – focus, respectively, on the paradox and on the ‘political impediments’ to education reform; Tedesco discusses the ‘political challenges’ to educational reforms; while Duarte discusses ‘particularistic trends in Latin American education’. The second part of the book presents the view on some of these problems of people who have actually been part of reform processes (one of the articles, for instance, is by former Argentinian education minister Susana Decibe). Most contributions explore aspects of the same problem: the way in which, because of political factors, policy making and reform processes have not achieved expected results. This idea could initially suggest a rather technicist approach to policy making, one where politics is seen as interference with what should be entirely technical decision making processes. Although this might be so in certain cases, I think the book in general points towards problems in the political process itself. That is, assuming that politics and policy making are inextricably linked, or that policy making *is* political, authors identify problems in the political process. In a line similar to that advanced in this study, Duarte’s chapter:

‘tries to argue that there are political phenomena, which have a historical and structural character, that hinder the development of reforms. These phenomena have in common the predominance of an educational agenda made of particularistic rationalities about the public interest, which express themselves fundamentally through clientelism, populism and unionism’ (p.64)

The reference to the historical and structural character of political phenomena – and public administration more generally – points in a similar line to Ruano’s (2002) admonition about the need to analyse the particularities of education reforms processes in states with pre-modern traits.

Moving in a different direction, but starting from similar concerns, Aguerro’s (2002) work on ‘Ministries of Education’ in the region presents a series of reflections about the organisational structure of education ministries, and how together with political and institutional elements they affect the making of education policies. The publication is based on a seminar which discussed the new forms that Ministries of Education should adopt in view of the challenges of the XXIst century. It begins with a discussion about the lack of reflection on these issues, which led to a survey of ministries’ organisational structures on which the seminar’s discussions were based. The concern that moves this work is similar to that expressed by Zorrilla (2002), who, in an analysis of Mexican education reforms suggests that ‘Education policies, as public policies in general, acquire the peculiarities that education ministries or

secretaries imprint on them; that is why their organisational structure impacts on the results they obtain’.

The fundamental premise in Aguerrondo’s (2002) book, consistent with this study, is that just as there is a need to think about substantial educational issues, it is also important to consider the institutional and organisational structures of the state that are in charge of conducting educational processes at different levels. From here it moves to suggest that this task takes place in a time when the role of the state is being rethought and reconfigured and that this raises new challenges and opportunities for state development. In this sense, Aguerrondo points to the lack of reflection about styles of policy making, which has often led to a consideration of the ‘amount’ of government rather than the forms and quality of it when thinking about institutional reforms. Contributors to the book suggest the need to move from hierarchically structured administrative systems, to a network organisation.

The idea of a change from hierarchical to network government fits well with current trends in political thought which point to a shift from government to governance. The latter takes the form of more decentralised and participative social coordination, and is related to reflections about the impact of globalisation and communication technologies on political practices (see Pierre *et al.* 2000).

The collection of papers on the ‘*Governance of Education Systems in Latin America*’ (Tenti 2004), gathered from a seminar with the same name that was organised by IPE in 2003, explores similar ideas. The focus of the seminar and the book is set on the transformations that educational institutions (from central administrations to schools) are undergoing as a consequence of global social changes. Some of the concerns that motivate this discussion are similar to those that motivate this study. In my case, however, research into policy discontinuity does not lead to advocating participation and decentralised decision making as the solution to existing problems. And, although I do not necessarily disagree with this agenda I think it is itself worthy of some scrutiny if we are to rethink politics and policy making⁶.

Apart from the views they advocate, these publications share a common awareness about the need to think and research political and policy processes in education. There is recognition that such processes influence the possibilities of policy making and that there is therefore a need to understand them.

In recent years such concerns have been matched by attempts to develop more substantial research about education policy processes. Merrilee Grindle (2004) has

⁶ I will not go into this discussion here, but chapter 9 develops related ideas.

published one of the more comprehensive studies in this area. The author analyses education reform processes in various Latin American countries (Mexico, Bolivia, Minas Gerais in Brasil, Nicaragua and Ecuador) with a focus on ‘the strategies of winners and losers, the institutional context, and the strategies of reform proponents’ (p.26). Interestingly, Grindle focuses on the sustainability of reforms in these countries, and discusses how such sustainability has been achieved in spite of the contentious nature of the reforms – which elicited opposition from various groups. This focus on sustainability can be seen as the flipside of the focus on discontinuity, and therefore my analysis of a case where such sustainability has not been achieved can be seen as complementary to Grindle’s.

One of the weaknesses in Grindle’s analysis, which can be explained by the author’s alignment to the more pluralistic tradition in policy analysis⁷, is the lack of discussion of the structural and historical processes that underlie policy making at any one time. Grindle’s analysis uses what can be described as a contingency approach to policy making (see Lindblom *et al.* 1993; see Rondinelli *et al.* 1990), where the outcome of policy debates or reforms is understood in terms of the interplay of various actors pursuing different and often contradictory aims which have to be negotiated during the process of policy development. Policy actors are portrayed as rational strategists facing different and changing pressures and demands as policies evolve. The problem with this is that, while it is a valuable contribution in terms of mapping the process of policy making, it does not tell us much about why actors, groups and institutions operate in these specific ways – a question that, I would argue, requires a broader focus on social and historical developments⁸. Furthermore, it overlooks that in an institutionally weak context where guidance in terms of party or national policy frameworks is lacking, the actions of policy makers and other related groups tend to be loosely structured, and decisions are not always the outcome of rational considerations, but often the result of the more idiosyncratic imposition of personal views in the definition of problems and solutions⁹.

A similar perspective is used by Corrales (2002), who explores the ‘Politics of Education Reforms in Argentina’¹⁰. The author analyses problems in the development of Argentinian education reforms in terms of a supply/demand model. Corrales questions models that portray policy makers as single preference actors,

⁷ See chapter 9 for a detailed discussion of perspectives on policy making and analysis.

⁸ This is what I try to do in chapter 8 where I link the idea of discontinuity to state development and the role of public education in it.

⁹ An idea explored in chapter 12 through the analysis of policy makers’ narratives.

¹⁰ A more general definition of the author’s perspective can also be found in (Martinic and Pardo 2001), where he discusses the ‘Political Aspects in the Implementation of Educational Reforms’.

and suggests that they should be conceptualised as multi-minded actors pursuing multiple and often contradictory goals at the same time. This explains why the outcomes of reforms are often 'incoherent, incomplete and sometimes inconsistent'. From this basis, the author sets to analyse the conditions that led education policy makers to accept a 'relaxation of initial preferences, and he suggests that political and institutional obstacles constitute the main reasons for change.

'As the reformer confronts political opposition and pressure, he or she is forced to relax this primary preference. The need to seek some kind of agreement (always preferable to no reform) forces the reformer to consider compromises.'

Although it offers an interesting and valuable perspective, I think Corrales' view is liable to similar criticisms as those made of Grindle's work. In this case, the idea of policy actors as having clear initial preferences is especially questionable. An interesting point that emerges from comparing these two authors' work is the need to develop a better account of change and continuity in policy making. Grindle (2004) defines policy sustainability in terms of 'the extent to which a reform initiative survived approval and implementation and the extent to which it was sustained over time without sacrificing its original objectives' (p.16). On the other hand, Corrales (2002) suggests that while the legal or external aspects of policies might be maintained over time, the content of policies experience considerable changes due to political negotiations. A better conceptualisation of normal and radical change in policies seems necessary as to capture the nuances of these processes.

Contributing to this same idea is Cousinet's (1998) study of educational assessment policies in a province of Argentina, which discusses how policies were dismantled by a new administration. Although they counted with plenty of support from various actors - the study thus points towards problems of discontinuity and calls for similar questions as the ones this study has set to investigate. Rivas' (2004) analysis of the way in which different actors represent policy problems, and how such representations are politically influenced and express power relations in the government of education can be seen as a further exploration of the reasons that might lie behind radical policy changes in Argentina.

One final study carried out by Haddad (1994) is worth mentioning, as the author presents a case analysis of the 1970's education reform carried out by the military government and points to similar problems as those analysed in this research, thus

suggesting more historical or structural trends in policy making that lead to discontinuity.

By way of summary, it can be said that existing education policy literature in the Latin American region is moving towards the conceptualisation of a new research area with a focus on the processes and not only the content or discourse of education policies. The dispersed and still limited work in this area calls for more substantive research as well as for more explicit attempts to conceptualise and explain problems within it. The present study of education policy discontinuity in Peru follows such a direction. At a more specific level, this study wants to contribute an alternative view to existing understandings of policy making by focusing on the socio-historical processes of state development that have led to existing institutional contexts for policy making. Moreover, it seeks to link the consequences and reproduction of such institutional arrangements to the existence of certain cultures of policy making – an idea that supports Duarte's (in Martinic and Pardo 2001) notion of the 'particularistic trends' in Latin American education policies. Through these ideas and the focus on discontinuity more generally, this work should contribute to a more robust conceptualisation of policy change.

CHAPTER 4 – BACKGROUND: PERU AND ITS EDUCATION SYSTEM

This chapter aims to provide some basic information on Peru and its education system. This initial contextualisation of the study of discontinuity will be followed, in later chapters, by a more detailed discussion of the education policy events that have characterised the period under study [1995-2004]. For now, the focus will be on some basic socio-economic indicators and on a portrayal of the situation of the public education system.

4.1 PERU

4.1.1 Basic indicators

In 2003 Peru's population amounted to 27,148 million. In 2002, 72.2 percent of these lived in urban areas, with Lima concentrating up to 30 percent of the population. Income data from 2003 showed a GDP per capita of 2,250 US dollars, a number which can be somewhat misleading as it locates Peru among the (lower) middle-income countries but conceals the existence of strong income inequalities. According to official data, in 2003 54.8 percent of the population lived in poverty conditions, while 24.4 percent of these lived in conditions of extreme poverty. In 1998 the country's GINI coefficient for measuring income inequality was high at 0.50. Although the coefficient has experienced considerable reduction in the past decades, recent reductions are associated with a wider spread of poverty. Consumption measures also highlight the prevalence of strong inequalities: in 2003, official data showed that the poorest decile of the rural population in Peru consumes 22 times less than the richest decile in the capital city.

The country's employment indicators help further the image of social and economic inequality. According to Saavedra (1998) 50 percent of the economically active population is engaged in informal economic activities. The latter generate 'bad quality employment, in the sense that workers do not have social benefits, have little working stability and low opportunities for advancement through learning (...) business and workers operate outside the legal framework and income and productivity are low ' (Saavedra 1998:22). The prevalence of informal economic activities is an indicator of the lack of opportunities for entering the formal sector. Moreover, such an employment structure generates important problems in terms of

the articulation of the education system to national socio-economic goals – an issue that will be further discussed in later chapters.

The inequalities expressed in income and employment indicators, reflect some of major problems faced by Peruvian society. These can be understood in terms of the prevalence of a highly unequal social structure, where the possibilities for social and economic advancement are still reduced in spite of considerable social changes. As shown by Benavides (2002), although in recent years social mobility has increased considerably in the low and middle social strata, there are still strong barriers to mobility from the lower to the higher social strata. The picture is then one that combines social dynamism with social rigidity.

Such inequalities weaken the country's degree of social cohesion – one of the indicators that, together with the above, Dahl (1991) suggests should be considered when attempting to define a country in terms of its degree of modernity. As shown in the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2003) that was set up to investigate the acts of political violence that jeopardized the country's stability during the eighties, the development of terrorist acts, and the way in which they were contained by the state, can be seen as a response to existing patterns of social exclusion. The report offers devastating figures of the number of victims of the terrorist political violence, who were mainly peasants in the rural highlands. But the most alarming – although not entirely new – facts presented by the report have to do with how the state did not take action until the terrorist violence spread towards the capital city; and with how vast sectors of the population remained largely unconcerned until they were more immediately affected. This offers an appalling picture of a country that can turn its back against a large part of its population, and raises questions about the notion of citizenship in Peru – where, as López (1997) suggests, there are 'real and imaginary citizens'.

As will be discussed in further chapters, these patterns of social inequality are also reflected in the conditions of the education system, where the public education sector, which caters for the majority, has often been characterized as offering an 'education for the poor'. The problem of discontinuity acquires special connotations in this context, as it can be understood as an element that contributes to the reproduction of existing social inequalities through the education system.

4.1.2 Social and political developments

Up to the first half of the 20th century Peru was organized along more or less traditional lines, with a small oligarchy composed of big land-owners controlling political and economic activities that were largely agrarian based. As will be seen in later chapters, when discussing the development of the Peruvian state, independence from the colonial power of Spain did not bring about a radical modification of the social structure, as the local elites replaced the colonial powers¹¹. Up to the 1950's the economy was organized along the activities of big landowners, who kept peasants in very low working conditions. A first wave of transformation in the country came during the 1950's with a generalized migration process in which peasants moved from rural areas into the cities. De Soto (2000) compares this with the processes that took place in 18th and 19th century Europe. This was also associated with a demographic explosion that led some urban areas, mainly Lima, to grow rapidly and without a planned or coherent pattern.

The process of migration into the larger cities has continued thereafter, with a new wave of increased migration during the 1980's, when terrorism, active mainly in the mountains and some parts of the jungle, led many to move into the capital city, fleeing not only from violence but also from the economic stagnation that it brought about. Migration and the consequent urbanization of the country were also stimulated by people searching for better educational opportunities and access to larger economic networks in the cities. The outcome has been the growth of the urban population, especially in the coastal cities and particularly in Lima.

A further, more steered transformation of the country came about during the 1970's, when the military dictatorship of General Juan Velazco Alvarado defined its mission in terms of changing the country's social organisation. As will be later discussed in more detail, this came about through the application of a radical agrarian reform, and through the promotion of industrial investment. The promise of social change, however, was not fulfilled and the 1980's began with the rise of a new democratically elected government together with increasing social tension. The decade was dominated by the rise of terrorist violence and, during the second half, by the return of a populist form of government that led the economy to collapse under record levels of hyper-inflation.

In 1990, Alberto Fujimori, the leader of an independent political movement was elected president. His government, which ended amidst a major corruption scandal, liberalised the country's economy through the application of structural adjustment

¹¹ This has led various authors to talk about the replacement of formal colonialism with forms of internal colonialism, where the basis of

reforms. Although this gave the economy an undeniable impetus, the major criticism of Fujimori's and the following government, is that economic policies of a neo-liberal economic kind have not – and cannot – reduce existing social inequalities and, on the contrary, deepen them.

The current government, which followed Fujimori's after a brief transition period, has been subject to the same critiques. Although Alejandro Toledo, Peru's current president, presented himself as a social-democrat, many argue that his economic policies are not far from those of his predecessor. This has led to the prevalence of social and economic inequalities, which seem to require much deeper transformations and a stronger degree of state action.

In this sense, Peru follows a widespread trend, in which:

'Greater openness has made small parts of the developing world fully fledged members of the global village. But in many developing nations, globalized islands of prosperity are thriving along-side vast and growing expanses of economic stagnation and human deprivation' (Kobrin 1999:152).

During its Republican history, and especially during the 20th century, the politics and economy of Peru have oscillated along the pendular lines of state-intervention and laissez-faire (Gonzales de Olarte *et al.* 1991). Neither conservative governments nor the more left-winged ones, however, have managed to reduce the high degrees of inequality in the country. Periods of macro economic stability and growth, associated with the former type of government structure have not been accompanied by greater and fairer redistribution of wealth, which continues to be concentrated on a rather small minority. On the other hand, periods of state intervention and more widespread wellbeing have led to macroeconomic imbalances which have yielded high inflation and increased poverty levels (Sheahan 1999).

4.2 PERUVIAN EDUCATION: QUALITY RELATED ISSUES

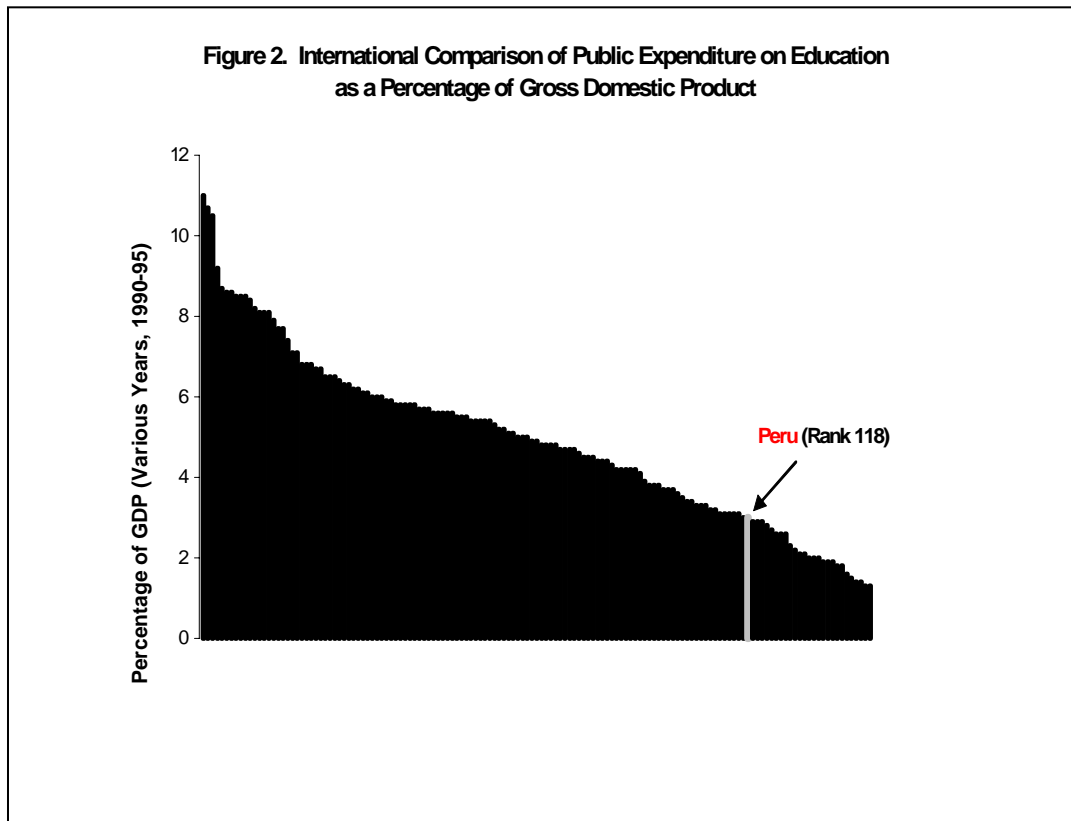
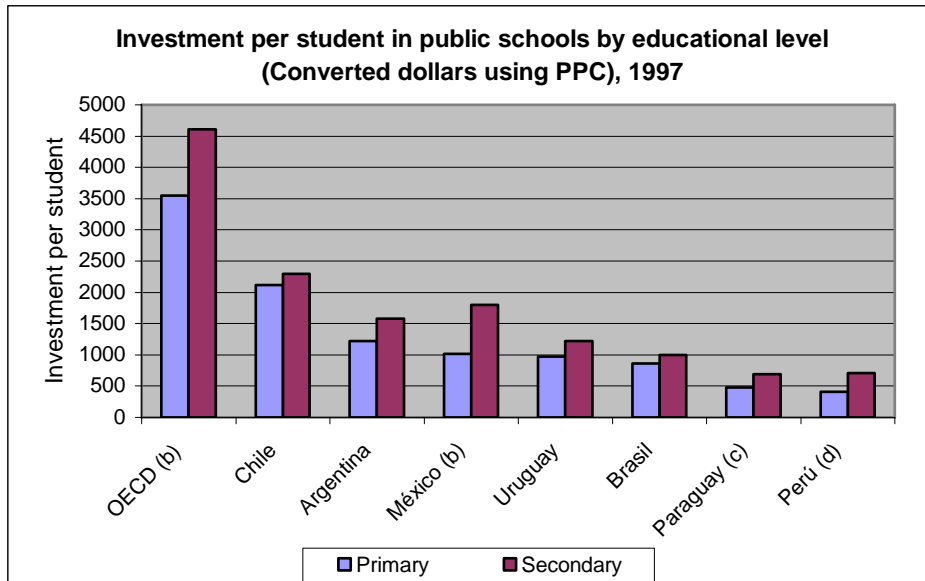
Since the second half of the XXth century, Peruvian public education has experienced progressive expansion – from enrolment rates of only 14 percent of the population in 1950, by 1997 36 percent of the population was enrolled in education. This has meant that during that same period, the average education level of the

population of age 15 and over increased from 1.9 years to 8.6 years (Bing Wu 2001). In 2001 the enrolment rate of the population between 6-11 years in primary education reached 91,5percent, while that of the population between 12-16 years in secondary education reached 65,6percent (Bing Wu 2001). This is undeniably a move towards more equitable provision of opportunities for social and economic advancement for the population.

The increase in access to educational services, however, has not gone hand in hand with growth in expenditure. Particularly during the 1980's, expansion of educational opportunities came at the cost of a reduction in investment. The economic crisis experienced by the end of the decade implied that per student investment reached one of its lowest points, with only 162 dollars per student being invested in 1990 (Saavedra *et al.* 2002).

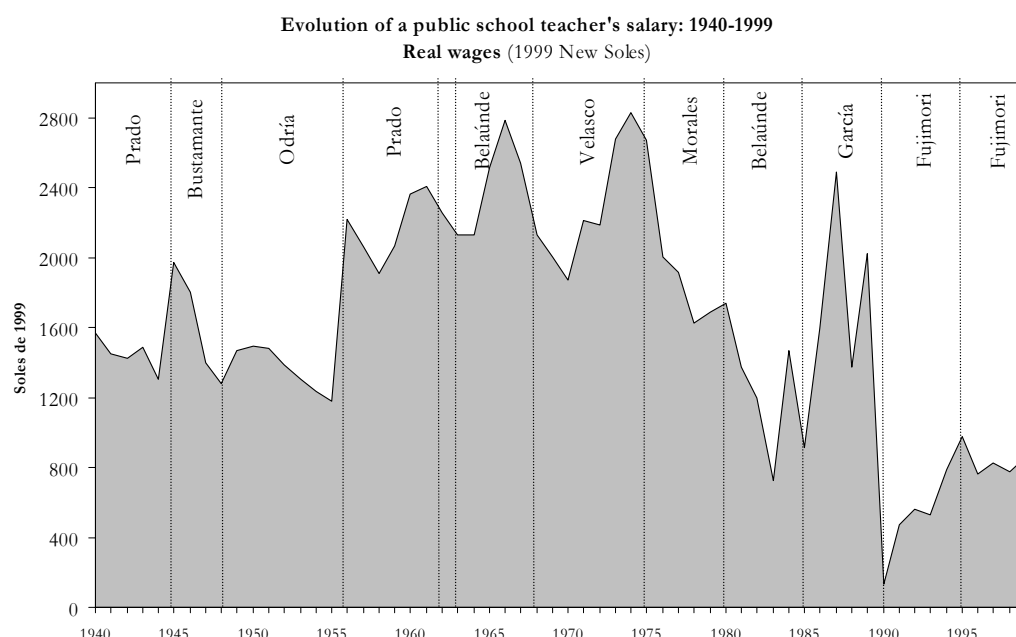
From the early nineties, expenditure in education began to rise steadily. By the end of the decade investment per student had risen to around 278 dollars - the point where it was in 1981, but still considerably lower than it was during the 1960's (Saavedra and Suárez 2002:12). An interesting indicator, is that around 38 percent of student expenditure is provided by families that, given the state's low level of investment, have been pushed to contribute to their children's education – a measure that, given differences in families' capacity to contribute to education, deepens inequalities (Saavedra and Suárez 2002).

Furthermore, as the graphs below show, Peruvian investment in public education is still low even when compared to other countries in the region, and way below minimum international standards.



Source (Bing Wu 2001)

This reduction in investment has had alarming consequences for the quality of public education. Teachers' salaries, for instance, have experienced a considerable reduction (see graph below), thus leading to serious problems in the teaching profession, as less qualified professionals are attracted to it.



Source: Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE)

A further problem is that most of the national education budget – 85 percent of current expenses - is spent on teachers' salaries and pensions, thus leaving a very low margin to invest in other goods and services (such as teaching materials, infrastructure, teacher training, etc.) (Saavedra and Suárez 2002).

Since the early nineties, the issue of educational quality has been on the spotlight. Whereas before problems of equity had been discussed in terms of access to educational services, the expansion of the education system has shifted the focus towards quality issues, especially as this expansion was in terms of service provision but not of the resources made available for education. The low quality of Peruvian education has recently become very obvious through the results of the OECD-PISA evaluation, where the country occupied the last place in reading comprehension and was also in one of the last places in math and science achievement. Latin American countries in general performed poorly, but Peru was lagging behind even when compared to the rest of the region. Peru has the largest proportion of students (80 per cent) at Level 1 (the lowest achievement level) and below, indicating that students are having serious difficulties in using reading as a tool to advance and extend their knowledge and skills in other areas' (UNESCO 2003).

Although the validity of these tests is sometimes questioned, such results only confirmed what had already been identified in the 2001 national tests. The latter showed that less than 10% of students reach the expected achievement levels in

maths and communication (Spanish language) at the end of primary education, and only 21 per cent and 5 per cent of students reach such levels in maths and communications, respectively, in the fourth year of secondary education (Espinosa *et al.* 2001).

Such low achievement can be partly explained by the low investment in education. However, as Cueto (2003) shows, investment levels alone do not explain the low achievement of Peruvian students. Internal inefficiencies –seen for instance in the high rates of repetition¹², which lead to high levels of wastage of the money- or the poor education of teachers are also major problems.

At the time of writing this thesis, the results from the new 2004 national tests came out. Most of the trends in achievement remain the same, with only 12.1 and 9.8 percent of students reaching expected levels of achievement by the end of primary and secondary education respectively. The tests evidence inequitable trends which favour private over public schools, urban over rural areas. They also provide new information as to the relation between teachers' knowledge of their field and student achievement and thus evidence the poor education of public school teachers. This problem requires immediate attention, and should lead to some changes in the negotiations with the Teachers' Union for more pay rises¹³.

The problems generated by the low investment in education are further deepened by inefficiencies in the education system. There are strong rates of desertion and repetition in both primary and secondary education that lead to a considerable wastage of money (PREAL 2003).

Taking a more qualitative approach to the issue of educational quality, Hunt (2004) analyses the educational reforms of the 1990's by focusing on changes within schools. The author offers a qualitative comparison of school practices in the early nineties and 2001 which is based on her visits to schools during these two moments. Her aim is to analyse the impact of programmes that were carried out as part of the nineties' reform process. Hunt's conclusions suggest that some significant changes were achieved through the programmes implemented during the second half of the

¹² Number of children having to do the same year twice because of academic failure.

¹³ Adding to the information from national and international tests comprehensive reports about the state of Peruvian education, like the National Evaluation prepared in the year 2000 for UNESCO's *Education for All* (Ministry of Education - Ministry of Education of Peru 2000) assessment, and the World Bank's evaluation of the state of Peruvian education (Bing Wu 2001) provide some insight into the reasons that might lie behind such low achievement. Both these documents acknowledge the considerable progress that Peru has made in terms of extending the provision of education nationwide, but highlight that this has been achieved at the expense of educational quality because of the lack of the necessary budgetary increases.

nineties. She noted, for instance, considerable improvements in school infrastructure, and also positive changes in teachers' practices, as there was more awareness about the need to involve children more actively in their learning process. The author, however, highlighted the still weak nature of these changes, especially of those related to teachers' practices, and suggested the need to consolidate them through further training and support. As will be shown later, however, this has not been the chosen line of action taken by the current government, as most of the nineties reforms were aborted. New changes were introduced which questioned what had been previously done.

A fundamental problem that the consolidation of these and other reforms have faced is policy discontinuity. As will be shown later through a discussion of education policy developments, the change of government at the end of the nineties led to a complete change of the policy lines that were followed during that decade. Although changes at this point might seem justified, especially when considering the anti-democratic nature of decision making during president Fujimori's ten year rule, discontinuity is a problem that affects policy making even within governmental periods (and not only when governments change). As is discussed in further chapters, even during the time of Fujimori, discontinuity was high; and afterwards, with the change of government, continuous changes have kept sweeping the education policy arena.

The problematic nature of such discontinuities has started to become part of educational discussions, albeit in a still incipient way. Referring to current problems in education, the newly formed National Council for Education included the following statement in a public document in which it expressed its main concerns about the state of Peruvian education:

'It is unacceptable that changes in government and even changes in ministers should lead to ruptures and traumatic changes in the education system, to the termination of ongoing programmes, to the disqualification of methods, to the destabilization of technical teams, to stressing teachers and disorienting parents. Particularly worrying are the massive changes of personnel; the abrupt announcement of a 'new pedagogical model' without the necessary studies and debates, and the scant information about the characteristics that curricular changes will have during the coming school year; the absence of a systematic response to the deep problems of national teachers which have become aggravated in recent years; the situation of hired teachers who have worked last year without redeeming their salaries and the possibility that this situation might occur again (Educación 2003).

In a report on the progress of Peruvian education in the last decade, PREAL (2003), also includes a mention of radical discontinuity in education policies as a factor contributing to the slowness of much needed educational changes. The problem, however, has remained largely untheorised and, as discussed in the opening pages, it is part of the background of policy discussions. The latter normally focus on the content of education policies, and rarely on the ways in which policies are handled. This is where the main contributions of the present work lie.

PART II - THE RESEARCH: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Critiques of neo-positivist and empiricist approaches to the social and natural sciences - with their claims to objectivity and universality and their assumption that knowledge can mirror the world transparently— have led theorists to emphasise the interpretive nature (or theory-ladenness) of our relation to the world. Taking on such criticisms has important consequences for the way in which we approach research, as they set limits – and also possibilities – for what we can do as researchers and how we can do it. I will discuss these issues in more detail throughout this chapter. For now, I wanted to raise them in order to show the way in which my reflections will move.

For the practical purpose of writing a methodology chapter, assuming a post-empiricist perspective has quite definite consequences. For one thing, if the way in which we develop our knowledge, or our research projects, is not so straight forward, is full of interpretation and doubt in view of a world that we can only partially know, should we not in some measure account for such partiality? For the limits of our knowledge? For the ways in which such limitations have led us to stumble across the way? And for how we have come to think in certain ways about our research topics? (see Crang 2003). Silverman (2000), for instance, argues that we might be better-off writing 'the natural history' of our research, than methodology chapters presenting a linear, clear cut, 'universal, 'objective' account of how we have gone about doing our studies. We can take this recommendation not only as a warning to avoid boring the reader with yet another straight-forward demonstration of methodological skill, but more as the consequence of assuming the ethical and methodological commitments that a post-empiricist perspective gives rise to. Ethical in the sense that we now *have* to account for the choices we make, for the subjectivity in our research; and methodological because an awareness of such issues should imply that we do things in certain ways but not in others.

Feminist post-empiricist thinkers have raised similar issues and now encourage researchers to incorporate some degree of reflexivity into the way in which they write and account for their research (see Rose 1997). This is the consequence of recognising not only that our knowledge of the world is always interpretive, but that interpretations are made from particular positions, contexts and situations. Reflexivity, then, 'is being advocated... as a strategy for situating knowledges: that

is, as a means of avoiding the false neutrality and universality of so much academic knowledge' (Rose 1997:306). A process of knowledge production that is situated through the explicit reflections of its author 'can no longer claim universality' (Rose 1997:308). Reflexivity, then, is a 'situating technology' that helps locate the researcher and his/her specific and limited perspective in relation to the research subject.

While I accept these suggestions – and they will be the guiding concepts for what I present in the following pages - I also take on the admonition, that precisely because our knowledge is situated, partial, contextual, etc. etc. we can never attain a perfect awareness about what we do, why we do it and the implications it might have (Rose 1997). No matter how hard we reflect upon these matters. Such a pretension would suggest the possibility of a kind of 'transparent reflexivity' that 'depends on certain notions of agency (as conscious) and power (as context), and assumes that both are knowable' (Rose 1997:311). In the end, any pretension of clairvoyant recognition is amenable to the same criticisms that post-empiricist researchers have directed at foundationalist and universalising knowledge claims.

Having said this I can now give way to this methodology chapter, in which, for the sake of rigour I will provide an account of my research design, sampling techniques, analytic claims and other methodological procedures, albeit in the context of a 'natural history' of my research into which I have tried to incorporate some degree of non-transparent reflexivity.

CHAPTER 5 – EPISTEMOLOGICAL STANDPOINT

The standpoint from which I have undertaken this research derives from post-empiricist critiques of knowledge development. I will begin to define my position by relating it to the way in which post-colonial critic Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes herself in an interview:

'My position is generally a reactive one. I am viewed by Marxists as too codic, by feminists as too male-identified, by indigenous theorists as too committed to Western Theory. I am uneasily pleased about this.'¹⁴

¹⁴ Taken from <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Spivak.html>

Before going on to explain my sympathy for this self-description, I should say that in no way am I trying to compare myself or the quality of my work to that of Spivak. Her comment, however, does reflect how I feel in relation to declaring or assuming allegiance to one particular body of thought. Like Spivak I tend to feel 'uneasily pleased' by my lack of identification (more personal than public in this case) with particular traditions of thought. I have always found it very hard to see myself as an 'ist' of any kind, be it a Marxist, a feminist, a post-colonialist, etc. etc. Maybe deep inside I am one of these things – that is for the reader to determine -, but I generally try to be consistent with my more conscious assumption that I am not. This will be reflected in my use of theory (theories, I should say) for the purpose of this research.

I understand Spivak's reactive orientation in terms of sustaining a critical attitude even towards the positions that one sympathises with, being sceptical about things, doubting. This is quite different from negating the possibility of *any* kind of action or commitment – be it political or conceptual –, or a form of judgemental relativism. In broad terms, this position can be understood as opposed to foundationalist approaches, which claim that 'we are justified in believing those theories that are appropriately related to a privileged source.' (Haig 1991:581)

Such views tend to emerge from positivist assumptions about the world, which hold that:

'reality exists as an objective phenomenon and is driven by laws of cause and effect that can be discovered through empirical testing of hypotheses and deductive statements' (Fischer 2003:118)

And which are tied to notions of scientific practice understood in terms of the application of empirically objective, value-free, methods leading to generalisations that are independent of 'social and historical context' (Fischer 2003:118). Empiricism is the accompanying method to such conceptions of science, which takes 'observational data to be that [privileged] source' and relies 'almost exclusively on empirical adequacy as the measure of good theory' (Haig 1991:581).

Positivist and empiricist approaches to science have been questioned by a series of philosophical schools which point to the theory-ladenness of empirical observations (see Sayer 1992). Inaugurating the phenomenological tradition Edmund Husserl's 'The Crisis of European Science', for instance, criticised positivism and showed how our most fundamental everyday understandings or perceptions of the world are

essentially interpretive (marked by subjectivity, or intersubjective meaning making)¹⁵. On a different line of argument, pragmatist philosophers like Richard Rorty (1980) and Donald Davidson (see Le Pore 1986), have argued against the idea that knowledge can 'mirror nature', and have promoted notions of truth as coherence or practical adequacy that attempt to overcome the idea of truth as correspondence.

For empiricist scientists, the possibility of 'reflecting' the world would come by eliminating subjective (interpretive) mediations when studying the world. Hence, empiricists, taking on the admonition to limit themselves to 'the observable', tend to reject demands for explanation in terms of underlying unobservable phenomena (e.g. social and historical structures); and reject attempts to answer such demands for explanation by postulating 'theories' (see Chakravartty 2004). In some cases, however, empiricism might take on a more instrumentalist guise, accepting the use of theories as long as they have predictive (rather than explanatory) value, that is, if they are 'truth conducive' (Chakravartty 2004) – where truth is understood as correspondence.

Bhaskar (1979; 1997) has developed an argument against empiricism and in support of a 'realist', albeit critical, approach to the social sciences in which theorising about the reality of the unobservable¹⁶ appears to be a valid form of knowledge production. While questioning empiricist assumptions about the possibility of knowledge mirroring the world, Bhaskar claims that ideas, or theories, not only shape such knowledge, but actually have an ontological status themselves. So, while he stands in the post-empiricist tradition, he still claims that knowledge (which is interpretive, fallible, etc.) does open into the 'world out there'.

To understand his argument it is important to note that Bhaskar (1997) is equally critical of positions that attempt to reduce the world to thought (some hermeneutic and allegedly some post-structuralist positions), as he is of the possibilities of reducing the real to the observable (positivism and empiricism). If he accused the latter of sustaining a naïve form of realism –where only observable things are assumed to be real -, he accuses the former of an epistemic fallacy – of conflating 'the ontological issue of the reality of ideas with the epistemological or ethical issue of their truth' (Bhaskar 1997:139). 'Like naïve objectivism, idealism collapses thought and its objects together, only the direction of the reduction is different' (Sayer

¹⁵ These philosophical ideas have been substantiated by development in the biology of cognition and perception (see Maturana 1988), which show that even the most elemental perceptions and thought acts are conceptualised, that is, theory laden (Sayer 1992).

¹⁶ For Chakravartty (2003), here, in questions about the reality of the unobservable, lies the dispute between empiricist and realist approaches.

1992:67). At the level of epistemology, that is, of how we come to know the world, we can say that it is always through theory or interpretation. This leads to a fallibilistic notion of truth, as there is no final foundation on the basis of which to determine the absolute truth of our theories. However, as Sayer (1992) shows, the notion that knowledge is fallible

‘supports rather than undermines realism. For it is precisely because the world does not yield any kind of expectation that we believe it exists independently of us and is not simply a figment of our imagination’ (p.67).

This is not entirely different to the views of Davidson, who argued that, although we do not have a final foundation to support our knowledge about reality, for all purposes we act or have to act as if reality indeed possessed certain characteristics. In this view not any form of knowledge is equally possible, as truth statements can be evaluated in terms of their practical adequacy (see Sayer 1992). Bhaskar, on the other hand, takes the route of a transcendental argument which leads him to suggest that ‘to deny the [ontological] reality of ideas makes their production wholly mysterious and their effects impossible’ (p.143)¹⁷. Given that ideas or theories exist, develop, change and emerge there must be a world out there to which they connect; besides, given that ideas have demonstrable effects on the world – think of the impact of science and technology on the world in which we live – it would be absurd to deny that they have ‘real’ effects. Of course, this connection between ideas and the world is not unproblematic, that is, it does not take place in any straight forward ‘merely mirroring’ manner, and so ideas – knowledge in general – remain fallible.

The notion of knowledge as being fallible has led post-structuralist thinkers to question the possibilities of representation – i.e. of the world through concepts or theories. They tend to emphasise the situated and historical nature of knowledge claims and the problematic nature of attempts to represent the world due to conceptions of ontology as change. If post-empiricist theorists highlight that we only know the world theoretically, and emphasise the real nature of theories (rather than empirical data), post-structuralist philosophers problematise the idea of representation itself. These critiques can be seen as taking the fallibilistic understanding of knowledge one step further. If the post-empiricist critique replaced notions of truth as correspondence with notions of truth as coherence, that are linked to notions of conventional (or intersubjective) understandings of the world, but,

¹⁷ Davidson does not exactly fall into this epistemic fallacy, but in his coherence theory of truth and knowledge he seems to suggest that judgements or theories can be assessed through coherence alone, while Bhaskar maintains a stronger (although non-transparent or linear) connection to ‘the world out there’.

foremost, to the practical adequacy of knowledge (see Sayer 1992), post-structuralist philosophers question these notions by showing the limits, the connections to power, and the fissures of representations. While post-empiricists questioned the positivist tenet that knowledge can 'mirror' the world, post-structuralists suggest that 'theories do not just explain (or predict or describe) a reality out there, but *discursively produce* mediated accounts of reality to which we do not have unproblematic access' (Kaul 2002:717).

For the purposes of this discussion it is especially relevant to consider the relativism to which some of these schools of thought supposedly lead. Assuming that we come to know the world interpretively, or through theory, would seem to lead, according to some critics, to assume that there is no basis for judgement, and therefore for discussing or assessing knowledge claims. Everything goes then. In the end, if the world is always interpreted, and only partially known, doesn't this to some extent imply that the world - reality, as something beyond interpretation - does not exist? That all we have is our subjective or at most inter-subjective (or conventional) understanding of things? This would obviously have serious consequences for science and for the contributions we attempt to offer through research – not to mention the consequences it would have for our everyday lives, political projects, etc.

Assuming a post-empiricist perspective - and, likewise, post-structuralist approaches- does not, however, necessarily entail a relativisation of reality to the point where any kind of action or idea is as worthy as any other. From phenomenologists, to some pragmatist thinkers and, I would argue, also post-structuralist philosophers, there have been different attempts to overcome relativism. In the work of Husserl, for instance, the idea of inter-subjectivity was developed to show that language offers a basis for a shared understanding of the world, a basis for judging between competing knowledge claims and for acting *in* the world. As Sayer (1992) highlights, however, the problem with notions of truth as convention is that they do not fully overcome relativism. By making truth dependent on conventional practices or common understandings, they overcome judgemental relativism at one level, but leave it open when it is a matter of judging between theories that belong to different conventional practices. For Sayer, this view fails to

acknowledge practice and the structure of the world, where certain notions or theories about the world are actually contradicted in practice¹⁸.

While intersubjective understanding of the world is fundamental, it is not sufficient to overcome the risk of relativism that comes from questioning notions of truth as correspondence. For Sayer, the idea of truth could be replaced by the notion of practical adequacy, where 'to be practically adequate, knowledge must generate expectations about the world and about the results of our actions which are actually realised' and which must also 'be intersubjectively intelligible' (p.69). The possibility of realisation in the sense discussed by Sayer, supposes that the world has a certain structure that is theoretically intelligible to us, but which would not accept just any kind of explanation – even if it were conventionally accepted. Theories, or representations, have therefore got to be sufficiently 'robust' in order to be deemed practically adequate, as otherwise the structure of the world would reject them.

This view is not entirely different to the one advanced by Donald Davidson (1986), who proposes a *Coherence Theory of Truth and Knowledge*, where although final confrontation – of ideas with the world – is still deemed unattainable, the possibility to judge between arguments – to assess their truthfulness is retained. 'Coherence yields correspondence' says Davidson, although it is 'correspondence without confrontation' (p.307). So although there is no ultimate form of confirming our theories about the world – and in this sense they remain fallible – we still have to, or actually do, live 'as if' the world existed:

'it is absurd to look for a justifying ground for the totality of beliefs, something outside this totality which we can use to test or compare with our beliefs. The answer to our problem must then be to find a *reason* for supposing most of our beliefs are true that is not a form of *evidence*' (Davidson 1986:314).

Before going any further, I will attempt to summarise what has been said up to now. The post-empiricist critique highlights the theory-ladenness of the world, and the unseparability of facts and values, and thus puts in question the possibility of un-theorised (objectively knowable and observable) phenomena. With this, the post-empiricist critique banishes the possibility of finding an ultimate foundation or guarantee for knowledge – which for empiricists lied in observable un-theorised phenomena – and moves towards a fallibilistic conception of knowledge. The risk with this move, is the possibility of idealism – i.e. that there cannot be any relation

¹⁸ It is, of course, difficult to determine what is the source of contradictions to theory, that is, whether the theory itself is faulty, whether there are problems in its implementation, or whether contradictions arise from unexpected factors that yet need to be theorised.

between ideas and the world - or relativism – the idea that ‘all knowledge is equally fallible’ (Sayer 1992:68). Philosophers and social scientists in the tradition of critical realism have found ways of overcoming these consequences by seeking to demonstrate, on one hand, the ontological reality of the world (i.e. a world beyond ideas), and on the other hand, the possibility of judging between ideas on the basis of such criteria as coherence, intersubjective understanding and, more strongly, their practical adequacy. In these views, theories about the world are not merely the product of our imagination or of convention, but relate to the world and can be judged on the basis of their explanatory power and practical adequacy – that is, on the basis of whether they create expectations that are realised in practical experience. In sum, the world will simply not accept any kind of explanation.

Of course, in many cases, this is easier said than done. If we have to judge between an argument that says that human beings can walk on water against one that says that they cannot, the ‘structure’ of the world will probably prove the first argument less robust (although maybe an expert in levitation would provide a counterexample). However, when we move into the realm of political or moral judgements choosing becomes more difficult once we problematise conceptions of empirical evidence.

It is in this terrain, although with implications for knowledge development in general, that the post-structuralist critique appears to play an important role. Discussing this here seems important because I will make use of some of such ideas at various points of my work, and also because they have implications for my approach to theory in general. Philosophers like Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida have criticised structuralism, by highlighting the fundamental impossibility to ‘discover’ a universal grammar underlying events. This is not entirely different from the fallibilistic notion of knowledge advanced by post-empiricist philosophers, although it can be seen as a further step in exploring its consequences.

According to the post-structuralist critique, no totalising rules govern reality, thought or language. Although, as realist philosophers contend, it is possible to discover some underlying continuities, the world, and knowledge in particular, is plagued by discontinuities, by difference as well as repetition. Foucault (1989), for instance, explicitly defines his task as the exploration of such discontinuities. Derrida (see Critchley 1999b; Derrida 1995), on the other hand, aims to deconstruct various representations of the world as to show their fissures, their internal inconsistencies.

In the case of Foucault (1989), this leads to the idea that all knowledge takes place, is tied to, reproduces and gives rise to discourses which are historically situated and,

moreover, entwined with power relations – rather than absolute and constant. Forms of speaking or thinking about things (of representing) are part of ‘regimes of truth’ which establish what normality is and how things deviate from it. Mental illness and government forms are now paradigmatic instances of this kind of analysis. For some this kind of perspective should lead to a permanent critical exercise in which commitment is almost impossible, as it would necessarily entail the establishment of new regimes of truth. As will become clear in the following chapters, the extent to which this is so is actually contested.

Some similar interpretations have been made of the work of Derrida, which – rather unfortunately (see Critchley 2005)- is often seen as less politically relevant and more concerned with the analysis of text. Derrida’s critique of the possibilities of representation is tied to a view of ontology – of the real – as permanently fluid and changing due to its embeddedness in time. If reality itself is so elusive, then the possibilities of representing it through language are even more so.

For some this leads to a kind of agonistic (combative, neverending, uncommitting, relativising) attitude of permanent deconstruction, where construction – of theories, for instance – would be impossible. A different line of reading, however, linked to an ‘ethical turn’ in interpretations of Derrida’s work (see Critchley 1999b), suggests that his views are far from idealistic positions where no relation between thought and the real world is possible. On the contrary:

‘Just as Derrida argues that each text opens up into the wider world of its intellectual or cultural ‘context’, so too does he seem to be saying that writing and culture in general also open into a broader context, which is to say that there is always a hinge, a point of contact or connection between language and the wider world’ (Clark 2003)

This opens up the possibility of representation, but representation itself remains problematic. This is why I suggest that Derrida takes a further step in exploring the fallibilistic understanding of knowledge advanced by critical realists like Bhaskar or Sayer. However, whereas for some interpreters this entails abandoning the possibility of representation (or of advancing theories) for others – on whose side I stand - it means, to put it rather simply, to act while doubting. Deconstruction – the permanent unbalancing of the stability of texts, representations and actions more broadly -, has nothing to do with destruction (of representation or theories). Rather than an exercise entailing absolute relativisation it can be understood as an ‘ethical’ attitude, from which we *act* and *make choices* or interpretations while also

acknowledging the incompleteness and contestability of our knowledge claims, or of developing a complete representation of some aspect of the world. While not negating the possibility of action, interpretation or representation, the insertion of doubt – hesitation – in the process (through deconstruction), entails a non-dogmatic approach to theorising – which is what I think Spivak's self-description points to. Decisions, representations, theories, are made, but pass through a moment of undecidability, perplexity, hesitation and deliberation¹⁹.

'The idea is not (as many believe!) to give up in the universe of infinite words and interpretations, but to carry on reflexively. (...) What this means is that we attend to the ways in which the coherence of beliefs is constructed or fashioned in specific contexts' (Kaul 2002:722)

It is with these ideas in mind that I have tried to approach this work. They have influenced not only my approach to the problem of discontinuity, but also my use of theory, the interpretations I make and the explanations I offer. Although the theoretical explanations I have developed for the problem of discontinuity constitute a way of *representing* the problem which I would contend is robust, I fully acknowledge their fallible and partial character. My reading of discontinuity is *one* reading that I propose, and which I have tried to substantiate, without however claiming that it is the best or more complete reading that could be advanced of the problem. It is a reading which has limitations and which invites discussion and contestation.

CHAPTER 6 - THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

My research, as briefly mentioned in the early chapters, has been mainly based on interviews with policy makers and other policy actors who have been involved in education policy developments since the start of the nineties reforms. Just these two choices – the period under study and the sample - require some justification and reflection.

¹⁹ This can be seen as a form of eclecticism, something that I do not see as problematic as long as it is assumed in a responsible way. This would mean that rather than simply assuming any theoretical standpoint that seems useful to explain a given phenomenon, one should be aware of theoretical incompatibilities between the stances assumed, and, if necessary, strive to compatibilise theoretical positions (which would amount to the development of new theory).

6.1 THE PERIOD UNDER STUDY

Setting the focus of the study in the period that goes from roughly the mid-nineties to about 2004, when the interviews were carried out, is quite significant. The mid-nineties mark the beginning of a series of reform attempts that were possible through loan agreements with international funding agencies such as the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank. These have served to fund reforms and programmes in areas such as curricular development, teacher training, school materials, rural and distance education and infrastructure, which had suffered from decreasing investment levels in the previous decade. As most of the budget of the education sector is used in current expenses (teachers' salaries, administrative expenses and basic school maintenance) it was only with moneys coming from loan agreements that more comprehensive reform programmes could be funded. So the mid-nineties mark the start of a period of educational reforms that breaks with the stagnation of the previous decade, in which hyperinflation and terrorist violence had curtailed state action in education.

The link between reforms and the presence of international agencies such as the World Bank and the Interamerican Development Bank also raises some interesting questions as to the extent to which discontinuity might be linked to certain conceptions of the state that are associated with the policies of such agencies. These issues are explored in the research.

A question that almost immediately arises when considering the focus on this period is whether discontinuity is a recent problem, or whether it has been present in Peruvian education policies for longer. The latter, as will become clear in further chapters, appears to be the case. Some of the existing literature suggests this. Haddad's (1994) case study of the Peruvian education reforms of the 1970's, for instance, points to similar problems as the ones I attempt to explain in this research. Some of the people I interviewed also suggest that discontinuity has pervaded policy making in previous decades.

Methodologically speaking, the temporalisation of the problem of discontinuity makes sense both practically – as a more extensive historical account is beyond the scope of this research, which aims to provide socio-political explanations for discontinuity -, and for more substantive reasons such as the increase in funding for reforms mentioned above. However, it will become clear in the course of the following chapters that discontinuity has to do with more pervasive problems that relate to the way in which the Peruvian state has developed. Discontinuity speaks of institutional

weakness, as well as of the cultures of policy making that have come to exist as a consequence, or together with, such routes to development. Moreover, and closely related to the latter, discontinuity speaks about the role of public education in Peruvian development. So, to answer the question above, discontinuity, both as a theoretical concept and as a phenomenon extends beyond the period in which the study focuses, but this period is a particularly relevant one to approach the problem due to the increase in education reform discourses.

6.2 THE SAMPLE

6.2.1 Characteristics:

The sample of interviewees comprises seventeen policy makers and other policy actors who have had direct or indirect participation in the reform processes that begun in the mid-nineties.

The selection of interviewee's was carried out theoretically and/or purposively (Silverman 2001)²⁰. The problem of discontinuity, although with probable (researchable) effects at the meso and micro levels of policy making, suggested problems at the macro-level of policy decisions. This led to a focus on the education policy making elite. Although some degree of stability could be found in policy making in terms, for instance, of the permanence of middle and low rank officials in the Ministry of Education, the problem of discontinuity suggested that higher rank officials had the possibility of redefining policy discourses almost at will, thus creating conflicts with the lower administrative levels and confusion at the micro-level (i.e. schools). This perspective is supported by existing literature. Grindle (2004), for instance, in a study of education policy making in the Latin American region shows that:

‘presidents and other high-level officials largely controlled when and how education reform was raised in political circles. They also played a major role in determining why the issue of education was important to pursue. Thus, specific education reform initiatives could largely be understood as elite projects that emerged from centres of decision-making power’ (p.55).

²⁰ Silverman (2001) suggests that theoretical and purposive sampling procedures are more or less interchangeable and/or complementary: theoretical considerations serve as initial selection criteria which are then complemented by practical considerations.

As will be shown later when discussing the characteristics of the Peruvian state and the administrative apparatus, such a situation has to do with the high concentration of power in the central government and with the way in which institutions – the ‘rules of the game’ for policy making – have evolved in the country.

Before going into how these considerations guided practical sampling decisions, it should be noted that the education policy elites do not necessarily correspond to the country’s socio-economic elites. The term elite here is specifically used to refer to ‘the powerful in education’ (Walford 1994). As will be discussed later, education policy making can be understood as a social field in itself (Ladwig 1994), which gives rise to specific relations of power (to decide, to change, etc.) in relation to educational matters, and which although related to or influenced by the power of other elites (i.e. socio-economic ones), has a dynamic of its own.

Such theoretical criteria for the selection of interviewees were complemented – or instantiated - through more practical considerations like: the positions held by interviewees in the policy process during the 1995-2004 period; their direct participation in policy making through positions in the Ministry of Education of Peru; their membership in influential institutions like the National Council for Education, Congress, Foro Educativo (an organisation that gathers influential figures in the national field of education); and their role as communicators (i.e. in national media).

The selection was largely helped by the possibility of locating individuals within organisational structures – such as in the case of the Ministry of Education. In the course of the fieldwork, the initial sample was extended through ‘snowballing’ (Goldfinch 2000; Merkens 2004), which helped identify other important interviewees.

Party-political considerations were not especially influential for identifying possible respondents. This, which in some cases can play an important role in the identification of relevant interviewees (see Fitz *et al.* 1994), is a rather weak criterion in a political context in which strong political parties have almost disappeared from the political scene, giving way to the prevalence of independent movements and electoral coalitions (Bardalez *et al.* 1999). Party allegiances are therefore rather weak and do not necessarily indicate the prevalence of specific ideological views²¹.

Seven ministerial administrations can be identified in the period under study, and teams from each of them were the target for the final sample. The main focus was

²¹ The crisis of political parties became especially evident in 1990, when Alberto Fujimori, the leader of an independent movement, beat traditional parties. The trend has dominated politics thereafter, as can be seen in the 1995 and 2001 electoral processes. The coalition through which president Toledo won the 2001 elections, for instance, grouped individuals of both left and right winged positions, who in some cases did not maintain their allegiance to the government after elections.

set on ministers, their close circle of advisors and heads of planning and programming offices. Some mid-rank officials were also interviewed as to see how the problem of discontinuity was perceived at other levels.

The final sample includes four of the five ministers who were in office during the 1995-2005 period, as well as officials from the time they were in office and members of the organisations mentioned above (National Council for Education, etc.). One minister from the period under study was deceased and one refused to be interviewed.

6.2.2 Access and ethical issue

Some researchers who have carried out interviews with education policy elites warn of the difficulties in gaining access to them and point to the need to identify gatekeepers who will sift requests for interviewing 'the powerful' (Fitz and Halpin 1994).

In my case, I experienced very few problems in terms of accessing the interviewees and getting them to agree on being interviewed. This was partly helped because of my previous knowledge of the education policy networks – through my work in the Ministry of Education and in a well known research institute. This allowed me to identify a few gatekeepers who then facilitated my access to interviewees. Here I must also thank GRADE (the Group for the Analysis of Development) for giving me their institutional support, which allowed me to approach interviewees as a member of a well known organisation rather than as a mere PhD student²².

Although my knowledge of people within the field of education policy making facilitated access, I also had to be careful as to the way in which my position in relation to certain individuals or organisations in the field would place me in the view of interviewees. I thus tried to understand not only the 'who's who' of education policy, but also existing conflicts between people or organisations that might have led to difficulties in access and in the rapport with interviewees. In general I tried to be aware of the sensitivities that might arise, especially as I was researching a politically charged area.

Practical issues aside, I have to say I was quite impressed at the ease with which access was granted by interviewees and by the openness some of them showed during the interviews. I have come to think that this relates not only to my position

²² I worked as a research assistant in GRADE before starting the PhD.

within the field of education policy – my relation to a well known organisation like GRADE -, but also to some kind of need on the part of policy makers to talk about their experience in the field. I believe interviewees must have soon noted that the aim of the interviews was not to gather specific information that could then be used to question their positions – as in the case of media interviews, for instance – but rather to engage them in a dialogue about their experiences in policy making. Although I cannot fully confirm this, the interview material suggests that in some cases the interview became an *opportunity* to talk.

Each interviewee was given a brief description of the research aims and each was told that the interview data would only be used for the research purposes. They all agreed to this and no one raised any question about confidentiality. This might have been because the interviewees, most of whom are public figures, are used to being interviewed by the press, and therefore might have taken these interviews as being similar. The lack of concern with confidentiality issues might also relate, however, to the lack of a strong research tradition in the country, which makes concerns with ethical issues somewhat rarer. This is also reflected in the fact that no interviewee asked for any of their comments to be considered as ‘off the record’. In spite of this, I have chosen to keep the identities of the interviewees as confidential, providing only referential information to the positions they occupied when interviewee’s are quoted in the analysis section.

6.3 THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

6.3.1 Active interviewing

If critiques of empiricist approaches to the social sciences have consequences for the writing of a methodology chapter, or a thesis, they also have important consequences for the way in which the process of data collection, in this case, through in-depth interviews, is approached. Reflecting on such consequences, Holstein and Gubrium (2004) developed the idea of interviews being an active process, rather than a more straight forward encounter in which the interviewer appears to be a neutral elicitor of responses from the interviewee. The authors are cautious to note that talking about ‘active interviewing’ does not denote ‘a distinctive type of interview’ method, but is rather the acknowledgement – and a step towards the enhancement – of what already goes on in any interview process.

Following the acknowledgement of the interpretive nature of our knowledge of the world, leads to the recognition that interviews themselves are an interpretive process in which 'data' is actively constructed in the encounter between interviewer and interviewee. Rather than information being already there in the mind of the interviewee, waiting to be elicited by the interviewer's neutral questions, information about real events as well as about the more subjective experiences of the interviewee is interpretively constructed during the interview process. As Holstein and Gubrium (2004) put it:

'... interviewing provides a way of generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives. In this respect, interviews are special forms of conversation. While these conversations may vary from highly structured... to free-flowing informational exchanges, all interviewees are interactional' (pp.140-141).

Although viewing interviews as an active, interpretive, interactional process does not entail a change in method – as interviews are always necessarily like this, fully acknowledging this can lead to some change in the focus of the interview. Awareness about interviewing as an interactive and interpretive process can lead the interviewer to place less emphasis on trying to obtain 'correct' or 'truthful' answers about facts or events, and more emphasis on the interviewee's experiences and views in relation to the research topics. As will be further discussed later, such a perspective on interviewing can lead to a focus on the interview as a narrative in which individuals talk or tell a story about their experiences. The extent of the emphasis on eliciting specific information or narratives – which would lead to the use of more or less structured interviewing techniques - will depend largely on the purposes of the research project and the definition of the research problem.

In the case of this study, the interviews combined semi-structured and open interview methods. The former were geared to elicit responses about specific issues that the initial theorisation of the problem of discontinuity had signalled as relevant, and which had to do with issues such as the elements of the policy process (e.g. transference and coordination between incoming and outgoing teams, formal and informal limitations on decision making), the institutional framework of policy making, the interaction between different policy actors and organisations; the influence of international agencies; the characteristics of the education bureaucracy, etc. Rather than a specific set of questions, the interview schedule included a set of themes about which interviewees were asked to reflect. Different emphasis was given to the themes according to the interviewee's expertise. This, however, was only one

element of the whole interview, which involved individual preparation as to focus on those areas on which the interviewee would be more knowledgeable. As policy-makers are 'public' figures, I could "read-up" on the respondents in advance, and so each interview could fulfil 'a specific and a general purpose' (Ball 1994b).

The more open sections of the interviews focused on the experience of policy makers, either through their direct involvement in the policy process, as stake holders or as members of influential organisations. The aim here was to get interviewees to articulate their views about policy making on the basis of reflections about their own personal experiences in the policy process. The outcome of this are a series of narratives which are particularly illustrative of the different cultures of policy making that arise in the context of existing institutional arrangements. Differences notwithstanding, the narratives suggest some underlying patterns in the approach to policy making in that in most cases there is a complete appropriation by individual policy makers of the space for definition of policy alternatives and ways of doing policy. This is closely related to the problem of discontinuity, which points precisely to the permanent redefinition of policy discourses.

6.3.2 Caveats of interviewing the powerful

Researchers who have studied education policies through interviews with 'policy elites' warn of a series of problems that might arise in the context of the latter (see Halpin *et al.* 1994; see Walford 1994). Apart from already mentioned difficulties in access, authors point to more substantial problems in eliciting responses and interpreting the material.

6.3.2.1 Interpretive strategies

Ball (1994b) warns about how interviewees will 'present themselves in a good light' will try 'not to be indiscreet' and will attempt to 'convey a particular interpretation of events, to get arguments and points of view across, to deride or displace other interpretations and points of view' (p.98). Although much of this can be said of any interview – where, interviewees will perform or more explicitly convey desired, expected or politically correct views of things (see Langellier 2001)– interviews with policy makers seem to increase problems given the interviewees public image and their experience articulating political public discourses.

Certain suggestions emerge from these considerations. Authors generally encourage researchers to go beyond the 'face value' of what is being told in the interview, and to attempt interpreting the discourses that are being constructed and performed by the interviewees (Ball 1994b; Fitz and Halpin 1994), or, what is similar, to be 'critical' of what we are told (Ozga *et al.* 1994). Researchers are warned not to uncritically accept 'elite narratives as the authentic, valid account of how policy was formulated and why' (Fitz and Halpin 1994:48), especially because 'the powerful' are in a position to more directly influence or reproduce dominant discourses.

Some of this can be taken as a general warning in qualitative research, especially if we take on post-empiricist critiques which highlight the interpretive character of knowledge. In this sense, Ball's (1994b) suggestion that we go beyond 'simple realism', that is, beyond naturalistic views of interviews (or knowledge more generally) as 'mirroring' the world out there (i.e. unproblematically, without interpretation) should really be applicable to any kind of interview material – as Ball himself suggests (see also Miller *et al.* 2004). This kind of perspective entails analysing the discourses, truth regimes or assumptive frameworks from which the interviewees speak.

Rather than simply assuming that interviewees are portraying how things 'really' happened, we should attempt to understand the way in which they frame what they tell us as to convey a certain image of how things should be done. In my interviews this comes through at various moments – for instance when interviewees comment on the quality of different ministerial administrations and compare them to their own, or when they are asked to comment on criticisms (from the media or other public authorities) of their administrations or on controversial issues and events. Acknowledging this does not entail negating that interviewees will also tell us 'facts', that is, it does not mean that the interview is an invention – as some radical constructionists hold (see Miller and Glassner 2004)- , but rather, that the facts and information that we get through the interview are framed by certain assumptions that influence the way in which those facts are spoken about. To emphasise Ball's idea, interviews are realistic accounts, but since reality is always interpretively known and constructed, we should be critical about the way in which interpretations mediate the accounts we get.

This is the viewpoint I have taken when analysing and presenting the interview data. The use of a narrative perspective – discussed below – has been especially useful to analyse the discourses that frame the interview data. However, the approach I have used generally incorporates warnings about 'simple realism'. This has guided also

the first part of the analysis, where interview extracts have been used to open up the discussion of certain issues related to the institutional framework of policy making in education. Here, I should highlight, the data presented is not in any way taken to unproblematically *reflect* the state of certain affairs (see Miller and Glassner 2004). Interviewees' comments are taken as possible openings towards, traces of real problems in policy making, rather than as transparent definitions of existing problems. These openings or traces are then theoretically explored as to gain an understanding of the problem of discontinuity. In this sense, I take the position that 'information about social worlds is achievable through in-depth interviewing' while not taking a positivist view 'of the possibility of untouched data available through standardised interviewing, nor... a romanticized view of seamless authenticity emerging from narrative accounts' (Miller and Glassner 2004:125,126).

Going back to the possible problems that interviewing 'elites' might raise, I think that some of these are actually less so in the case of my research. Due to the emphasis of the study on the processes of policy making and on interviewees views and experiences therein, the interviews aimed at gauging opinions rather than eliciting facts about policies. Although there is a definite interest in *how* things happened, the central point of the interviews was from the start to understand how problems were experienced by different policy makers, how this reflected their approach to policy and how such approaches could help explain the problem of discontinuity. Through this process however, the interviews also produced information about some of the central problems that affect policy making in education. This information, as mentioned above, was taken as being interpretive and non-transparent.

6.3.2.2 Interviewing strategies

As well as these interpretive strategies when dealing with elite interviews, there are some more practical issues related to the handling of the interview process.

In terms of preparing the interviews, for instance, the public character of interviewees and their relation to public problems in education policy allows one to 'read-up' on the interviewees beforehand (see Ball 1994b). Apart from helping to get the interview going, this is useful when trying to talk to the interviewees at a more personal and specific – rather than general – level, as one can refer to specific events or issues on which they have participated.

The process of 'reading up' was not limited to individual issues, but was rather part of a strategy of 'immersion in the culture and community of policy influence and policy

struggle' (Ball 1994b:98). This allowed me to better prepare for the interviews, and also to reassure interviewees that 'I was informed enough' about general aspects of the policy process. The importance of this was not only as a way of dealing with the interviewee's power to control the interview (see Fitz and Halpin 1994), but also as to avoid turning the interview into a process of 'information giving' rather than an account of personal views.

In this context, 'reading up' and 'immersing' in the culture and community of policy, involved such things as following debates on the national media, reading bulletins and other publications on educational issues²³, and also holding more informal talks with some of the 'gatekeepers' who provided me with information about various issues.

Also in relation to the practicalities of interviewing policy elites, Fitz and Halpin (1994) mention how interviewees are often 'used to either being deferred and listened to, or "just talking" to their own agenda' (p.26). In the case of their own interviewing strategy, the authors found the use of semi-structured interviews to be particularly useful to maintain the interviewer's agenda. This however, can be seen as going against more ethnographic practices of interviewing where control of the content of talk during the interview is handed over to respondents (Ball 1994b). The active interviewing perspective that I take, however, allows for a combination of strategies, as the focus on who 'controls' the interview is somewhat diluted by acknowledging that the interview is constructed or controlled by both interviewer and respondents²⁴. In this sense, the non-positivistic or 'active' approach to interviewing taken here 'recognises' and 'builds' on the 'interactive components' of interviews, 'rather than trying to control and reduce them' (Miller and Glassner 2004:126). This, of course, does not rule out problems of 'agenda setting' during the interview, but the latter, can be understood as a matter of balancing the focus on what the interviewer is interested in with what the respondent wants to bring into the interview, rather than as keeping control over the interview.

The initial framing of the interview, in which respondents are told about the subject of the research and the 'aims' of the interview, is a rather obvious strategy in this sense. In this study, the preparation of an interview schedule allowed for coverage

²³ The informational bulletins of the National Council for Education, which I receive as part of an interest group, were particularly useful for this, as they present information on debates, discussions, reports, etc.

²⁴ Silverman (2001) locates the more ethnographic approaches to interviewing within the 'emotionalist' trend in qualitative research, which pursues 'natural' and unmediated accounts of individual experience and is therefore amenable to similar criticisms as positivism. While positivism seeks objectivity through 'scientific' procedures, emotionalist perspectives seek objective personal accounts by reducing mediation – the interviewer's influence in this case (see also Miller and Glassner 2004).

of certain general themes that could then allow for some degree of comparability and cross-checking between the interviews, which was especially useful during the thematic analysis of the data – not so much for the narrative analysis. This, rather than a way of achieving more ‘adequate’ views, is a way of granting better explanatory power through the development of more complex theories²⁵. The framing and schedule were flexible enough as to allow new topics to enter the research agenda, and strong enough as to avoid losing the focus on the research problem.

As a way of eliciting information on personal positions and views, the respondents were often asked to comment on specific controversial issues or criticisms of their administrations and their decisions – which I had learned about through public discussions. Confronting the interviewee with specific issues served as a strategy to overcome generality in their discourse and compel them to talk about their positions more specifically.

Ball’s (1994b) comment that interviews are ‘a confrontation and a joint construction’ (p.97) is especially relevant here. The confrontation in this case, was not at all at a personal level, and the reference to ‘public’ criticisms and debates was useful to avoid giving respondents the impression that I –the interviewer- was criticising them personally. My questions were thus phrased in terms of: “x and y have criticised your administration for xyz, how would you respond to these criticisms?”, or “your decision about x was questioned, how do you justify it?”. Individual preparation of the interviews and my immersion in and ‘reading up’ of issues of the world of education policy making previous to the fieldwork was fundamental for this. Moreover, as the interviews progressed I gathered new information that could be used for this purpose – being careful, of course, of not breaching the confidentiality of what respondents had told me.

6.4 ANALYSING THE DATA

‘analysis is not just holding up a mirror to give a ‘true picture’, but a practical action of describing and relating things to answer specific needs and questions’ (Crang 2003:133)

6.4.1 Transcription, translation and summarising

Once I had collected the interview data I set on the arduous process of transcribing and translating - since the interviews were carried out in Spanish.

²⁵ See below the discussion on ‘triangulation’.

The process of transcribing interview data is often taken for granted as unproblematic (Lapadat *et al.* 1999). As Riessman (1993) highlights, however, transcription is a fundamental stage in analysis, especially as it entails framing and representing the interview data in particular ways. Choices about how to transcribe usually reflect the researchers' conceptions about the interview data and language more broadly. Lack of reflexivity in relation to this issue often suggests a perspective in which language is taken as a transparent means for communicating meanings, rather than an interpretive medium (Riessman 1993).

In my case, the usual choices that are made when transcribing data and representing it in particular ways (which can include, for instance, attention to non-verbal elements like pauses, or to the nuances of talk, like highs and lows in intonation), were further complicated by the fact that I had to translate most of the interviews for the final analysis. As initially I was not sure about what elements to select for translation I decided first to transcribe all the interviews in Spanish, with some focus on elements of the talk like intonation, laughter, pauses, etc. This first stage, though lengthy and time consuming, proved to be a fundamental building block for the analysis, as it allowed me to gain familiarity with each interview.

Translation was a second stage in which the data was represented in a particular way, as rather than translating the whole interviews I decided to make selections in order to save some time. I actually ended up translating most of the material, as at that stage I found it difficult to make choices as to what was relevant or not. The choices I made as to what to select were theoretically guided: I based them on some of the initial definitions of the problem and on the new ideas that emerged during the fieldwork and transcription. At this point, I did not yet know that I would be doing narrative analysis, for instance, but still I chose to translate parts of the interviews that, although not so obviously relevant for the thematic analysis, seemed important, as they conveyed central elements of the interviewees' perspectives. As the analysis progressed I sometimes went back to the original transcription to search for new elements to include in the translation.

When I concluded transcribing and translating, I embarked on a third state of summarising some of the interviews. Initially I was moved to do this as to be able to discuss the interviews with my supervisor before moving on into a more explicit stage of analysis²⁶, but looking back, this process proved to be a valuable building block in the process of interpretation, as it allowed me to further familiarise myself with the

²⁶ More explicit because these first stages were already part of the analysis process.

interviews and the main issues that arose from them. Such efforts to develop a 'thick presentation' of cases' (Bhöm 2004) can be seen as an additional stage in the process of interpretation²⁷.

6.4.2 Coding and some initial shortcomings

I must confess that the often tedious process of transcribing and translating provided some shelter from the imminent need to actually interpret the interviews in connection to the problem of discontinuity. From my own experience and discussions with fellow beginner researchers, I think we are often so keen to go out into the field and collect data that will help our projects materialise, that we often overlook the fact that the data itself, once collected, will not on its own tell us very much. This is especially so in qualitative research, where analysis is fundamentally a process of interpretation²⁸. Once we have our interviews, documents or whatever form of data we have collected we not only have 'reduce' it (Marshall 2002) or 'discipline' it (Crang 2003) into a manageable form (i.e. through transcription, translation and coding), but we have actually got to make sense of it all. So the sense of accomplishment we might feel when coming back from the 'field' can soon turn into boredom and then often extreme confusion and anxiety at the overwhelming task of producing a coherent interpretations. Crang (2003) describes the frequent 'pleasure that often occurs... when we complete fieldwork' as 'the lull before the storm' (p.126).

The work of interpretation – although it actually begins during the fieldwork, and goes on during transcription - is usually grounded on the equally laborious process of coding our data. When describing such a process, Marshall (2002) uses words such as 'ambivalence' (a 'love-hate relationship with qualitative data'), 'mental chaos', 'frustration', 'hope' and 'despair'. And I must say I experienced them all.

I began coding the interviews guided by my previous theoretical knowledge of the topic – gained through my own experience, the review of literature and the knowledge gained during the fieldwork. In this process I moved from more or less open coding to more structured development of analytical categories (Bhöm 2004; Miles *et al.* 1994)²⁹. This was done with the help of qualitative data analysis software

²⁷ Charmaz (quoted in Bhöm 2004:275) has suggested that this should be one of the stages in grounded theory.

²⁸ Although interpretation also plays a central role in quantitative research.

²⁹ The path I followed is somewhat similar to Grounded Theory procedures (see Bhöm 2004), but less inductive. I began coding with a set of flexible categories which were pre-defined on the basis of the initial problem definition. As the analysis evolved, new categories emerged and some of the initial ones were abandoned altogether. In this I adhere to some reformulations of Grounded Theory in terms of abduction, which show the impossibility of carrying out analysis in a merely inductive way – since, as

(NVivo), which considerably facilitated the organisation of the data and the move from open to more structured coding.

Initially, the coding process was very helpful to put some order on the sometimes overwhelming nature of the material, which seemed to open up in many directions. The data was being effectively 'reduced' and patterns were emerging from it. But I soon reached a stage in which I began to feel 'trapped' by the coding process. Not only did it feel quite mechanical, but this 'reduction' of the data seemed to leave out what I thought were crucial issues that the interviews were pointing to. The coding seemed to fragment the data into manageable bits that could lead to the identification of more or less transversal themes running across the interviews. But it was not capturing the richness of some of the interviews, which, in my view, lied in the use of language, in the extensive stories that were being told by the interviewees and which were not all that 'codable'.

Not really knowing how to make sense of my feelings of frustration, I embarked on the task of trying to put together what I had up to that point. I ended up writing a paper in which I discussed various issues related to the institutional context of policy making, which was what the coding was leading me to capture. This proved to be an extremely valuable process, not only because it helped me make some sense out of my data, but because when I actually finished writing the paper, the reasons for my initial discomfort at only using coding as a means of interpretation became clearer. It was obvious that such a procedure was not capturing elements of the interview data, which by then I knew were essential for the interpretation of discontinuity that I was developing. This process reflects Crang's (2003) idea that 'analysis is not simply an issue of developing an idea and writing it up. Rather, it is thinking by writing that tends to reveal the flaws, the contradictions in our ideas, forcing us to look, to analyse in different ways and rethink' (p.130).

In search for a better way of interpreting the interviews I came across with Riessman's (1993) *Narrative Analysis*. I experienced a kind of 'epiphany' mixed with relief when I read about her own experience of frustration at the result of applying traditional coding procedures which 'often fracture... texts in the service of interpretation and generalization by taking bits and pieces, snippets of a response edited out of context' (p.3). Soon after I started learning about narrative analysis and applying it to my own data, I had the fortune of participating in a narrative reading group organised by the University of Bristol which was conducted by Riessman

has already been discussed, the process of analysing or categorising data is always already theory-laden (Haig 1995; Sayer 1992),

herself, and which only led me to confirm the usefulness of the approach for my own research. And although I had not intended to use narrative analysis when I first set out on the endeavour of collecting the data, my approach to interviewing, with a combination of open and semi-structured elements, had facilitated the production of extensive narratives.

Moreover, although I take on Riessman's points about the need to analyse the 'whole interview' rather than fragmenting it for the sake of finding transversal themes – a perspective that in some cases can be associated with 'empiricist' assumptions about the validity and generalisability of qualitative analysis (see Silverman 2001; see Steinke 2004) -, my own data required a combination of narrative analysis with a more conventional approach to coding. As Riessman herself suggests, not all interview data, nor the totality of a single interview, are amenable to narrative analysis. Some elements might be better captured by coding and searching for themes, while others will be better analysed as narratives. This was precisely the case with my interview data.

With these ideas in mind, the analysis was refined through the identification not only of codable themes, but also whole narratives. Once the data had been divided in this way I proceeded to the interpretation and organisation of themes and narratives. Here I moved into a stage of 'selective coding' (Bhöm 2004): as the pattern of interpretation became clearer I was able to select certain themes that were relevant for the final analysis, while other less important areas were left out. The process of coding was theoretically driven. Initial readings of the interview data that called led to the formulation of initial explanatory theories or hypotheses that were later explored and refined or abandoned during the analysis. The coding and analysis hence describe a process of abductive hypothesis development and elaboration.

The selected themes, as will be shown later, pointed towards the institutional framework in which education policy making takes place. The definition of codes and later identification of some central themes was theoretically guided by the literature and initial definitions of the problem of discontinuity. Meanwhile, the narratives suggested the existence of policy making cultures that emerge from that context but also help to reproduce or even deepen existing institutional problems.

Before going on to provide some further explanation of the narrative approach used in the analysis it might be interesting to further consider the impact that different interviewing techniques have on the production and analysis of the data. In this case, semi-structured sections of the interviews led to the identification of codable themes.

Most of the themes correspond to some of the original definitions that were made of the problem of discontinuity, while some other themes emerged through the coding process. On the other hand, more open sections led to the presence of narrative or stories in which the interviewees made sense of their experiences in policy making. Had I only used a semi-structured approach the narratives might not have been developed and I would probably have come with a different interpretation of the problem of discontinuity.

6.5 NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

My use of the narrative analysis method is largely based on Riessman's (1993) ideas, which suggest that the aim of this approach is 'to see how respondents in interviews impose order on the flow of experience to make sense of events and actions in their lives' (Riessman 1993: 2). In this particular case, I am using narrative analysis to understand how interviewees make sense of their experiences as education policy makers and how they explain their actions and construct policy discourses. Used in conjunction with an analysis of the institutional elements that underlie and give rise to discontinuity, the narrative approach is useful to see how policy makers exert their agency in a context framed by such social and institutional arrangements. This perspective is coherent with my understanding of education policy making as a field in itself, with its own rules and characteristics, which are influenced but not fully explicable by reference to structural issues (Ladwig 1994). I believe that a focus on policy narratives offers a way to understand the actions and beliefs of individuals within the field, and that this is central to understand the issue of discontinuity.

As a research methodology, narrative analysis developed as part of the 'interpretive turn' in the social sciences, which shifted the focus of analysis towards meaning making processes. The focus of this perspective is thus set on representations, that is, on the particular ways in which people frame and represent the realities of their lived experiences in meaningful ways. Through the analysis of such representations, it is suggested, we can have a better grasp of the meanings that arise from human experiences and which give rise to specific social developments. 'Not merely information storage devices, narratives structure perceptual experience, organize memory, "segment and purpose-build the very events of a life"' (Riessman 1993: 3).

There are different perspectives as to what kinds of data are suitable for narrative analysis. Labov (in: Riessman 1993), for instance, suggests that narratives should

have a traditional plot (beginning, middle and end), should include clauses and verbs in the past tense. Others (Riessman 1993), however, suggest that some forms of talk that do not conform to such patterns are still amenable to narrative analysis. Czarniawska (2002), for instance, uses Todorov's less conventional conception, in which the 'an "ideal" narrative begins with a stable situation, which is disturbed by some power or force' (p.735). What is important is to bear in mind that different definitions of what constitutes a narrative lead to different methodological approaches for the analysis (2004).

In the present study, the concept of 'narrative' is used in the broader sense. This is because although in some parts the interviews follow other types of structure (e.g. questions and answers), the interviews themselves were structured as to elicit narrative accounts. Respondents were asked to talk about their experiences in policy making. Initial open questions about the context in which they participated in policy making (beginning), were followed by questions about the problems they faced during this time (middle), to end with the interviewees overall balance of their role in policy making (end). The interview itself, then, had a narrative structure, which in some cases was combined by a more focused discussion of issues related to the institutional matrix of policy making. The parts that have been selected for analysis are those that, although they might not have an explicitly narrative character, are central in the narrative as a whole.

6.5.1 Relevance for this study

I believe that the combination of a focus on narratives with a focus on themes offers a more complete understanding of the issues under study. As discussed before, in this particular study, the need to analyse interviewees' narratives became pressing during the first stages of the analysis process, in which a focus on the coding of specific issues seemed to overlook the richness of much of the data, which lay in the 'stories' that interviewees were telling, and which accompanied and gave sense to the more focused discussion of specific issues. This opened up the need to focus on each interview at a deeper level, analysing their narrative structures, which are fundamental to understanding the interactions between agents (policy makers) and the institutional arrangements in which education policy making takes place. This perspective is particularly relevant precisely due to the country's and the education sector's institutional characteristics, which leave considerable space for individual discretion. Individual elite policy makers can thus determine and change the direction

of policies, and without a more organised process machinery to sustain and support policies, it sometimes seems that policy makers *are* or embody the policies they propose. An understanding of individual perspectives on policy making is therefore fundamental.

Furthermore, the narrative approach appears particularly relevant in view of the limitations inherent in interviewing policy elites that were discussed above. Through the stories they tell, interviewees (and people in general) are continuously 'performing' their identities in ways that convey how they want to be seen, and what they consider good, desirable, etc. (cfr. Langellier 2001; Riessman 1993). As my own experience and that of others researching education policy (Halpin and Troyna 1994) has shown, in the case of policy makers, the interviewee's 'narrative performance of identity' (Langellier 2001) is highly politicised. Interviewee's want to portray themselves, and are particularly skilled at doing so, in ways that are politically convenient, and for this purpose 'events are often naturalized' (Czarniawska 2002:746). This, as Ball (1994a) suggests, makes it especially inadequate to simply take what is said at face value, and requires reflecting on the context and possible aims of what is being said. The narrative approach seems particularly relevant for achieving this purpose, as it sets the focus of analysis on the identities being performed by interviewees and on what these tell us about their values, positions, motivations and political aims.

Focusing on interviewee's narratives has been fundamental in understanding the ways in which policy makers view the policy process, and this is a centrepiece in the analysis of discontinuity. Portrayals of themselves, of competing teams, their views on specific policies and their understanding of what policy making is about, are as much at the basis of the characteristics of education policy making, as are features of the bureaucracy and the institutions that set the rules for policy making activities. In fact, they are mutually constitutive: that is, the institutional and structural characteristics of education and policy making therein, give rise to particular forms of action, which in turn are constitutive of, and help reproduce the structures in which education policy making is embedded (Giddens 1984)³⁰. The narrative perspective, rather than a mere focus on individual beliefs, can reveal much about social life, as 'Narrators speak in terms that seem natural, but we can analyze how culturally and historically contingent these terms are...' (Riessman 1993: 5).

³⁰ This view is consistent with Giddens' theory of structuration which 'while acknowledging that society is not the creation of individual subjects, ... is distant from any conception of structural sociology' (Giddens 1984: xxi)

One final point: the relevance of analysing personal narratives in the context of this study appears to be stronger in view of some of the theoretical developments presented in the following chapters. As will be shown, reflections on the chronology of education policies in the 1995-2004 period, based Majone's (1989) ideas on policy making suggest that a discursive core has not been formed in Peruvian education policies. This allows each group of policy makers that gets into the Ministry of Education (MED) to act according to their own narrative, which, in turn, does not find a core to articulate with –neither in terms of a set of basic assumptions, nor in terms of a set of policies. This, I would like to suggest, together with the loose institutional arrangements in which policy making is embedded, and more broadly, with the structural role of education in national development, renders personal narratives even more important in the determination of policy actions. Without much institutional (bureaucratic and legal) and theoretical (a core of policy ideas) constraints, the definition of new policy lines according to the personal views of policy makers is much more feasible. Narratives, then, are a major resource in the explanation of discontinuity.

6.5.6 Perspective on narrative analysis

In recent years, the narrative approach has been used and adapted to the field of policy analysis (Roe 1994) and organisational analysis (Czarniawska 2002). Roe (1994), for instance, has developed a narrative approach for the study of policy controversies which has been successfully applied and extended by other policy analysts (cfr. Bridgman *et al.* 2002).

My approach differs from Roe's to the extent that it takes a focus on narratives to be much more broadly applicable than for the exclusive analysis of policy controversies. To some extent, it could be said that all policy issues are controversial, as there will rarely, if ever, be univocal and uncontested problem representations in policy making. The narrative approach is therefore relevant for the analysis of problem representations in general, as it helps develop an understanding of the standpoints that ground different representations. Embracing this broad view of narrative analysis, rather than Roe's more limited definition, is particularly relevant for this study, which focuses on policy making practices rather than on specific policy controversies. Narrative analysis, in this case, is central to understand those practices as they are explained, defined and enacted by policy makers.

The narratives will initially be presented in detail and will lead to an analysis that will be guided by a series of questions that have been deemed theoretically relevant and which focus on the standpoints from which the narratives are articulated (more details on this below) – and that can be seen as elements of the interviewees ‘practical consciousness’ (Giddens 1984), which ground their disposition to particular ways of policy making (i.e. deliberative, authoritative, etc.). The idea is to understand the extent to which these elements influence the characteristics of education policy making in Peru and how they influence discontinuity.

Four narratives have been selected for detailed analysis. The choice of narratives was based on the extent to which interviews appeared to represent particular perspectives on policy making that were dominant during the 1995-2004 period.

6.7 NOTES ON THE VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE PROPOSED INTERPRETATIONS

I have already discussed the standpoint from which I have carried out this study and along the previous pages I have developed many ideas in relation to how this has affected the methodological choices I have had to make. I will therefore only dedicate briefly to discuss some issues related to the claims I make in the following chapters.

Although I would not in any way attempt to tell the reader how to assess the quality of what I say, I do think it is important to discuss the kind of quality criteria I have tried to satisfy. This seems particularly important given the variety of positions that exist in relation to how to assess qualitative research. Many discussions in relation to this issue have pointed to the insufficiency of criteria of validity and reliability imported from quantitative research practices (Silverman 2001; Steinke 2004). The idea of validity in particular, which is normally understood as ‘the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers’ (Hammersley in: Silverman 2001:232) has often been the target of post-empiricist critiques. If we remember the initial discussion of these matters, the idea of ‘accurately representing’ rather than merely ‘mirroring’ would partly seem to solve the issue. However, the term ‘accurately’ remains problematic. What is an accurate representation of things?

Writing from a post-empiricist perspective, Silverman (2001), for instance, highlights the importance of maintaining credibility in qualitative research, although the latter should not be understood in terms of correspondence. He discusses some of the

risks in which qualitative researchers can incur, particularly the risk of anecdotalism, in which data are accommodated by the researcher to fit one particular account, leaving out of it all that does not fit.

Criteria like data triangulation and respondent validation have often been proposed as a strategy to increase validity of qualitative analyses. Silverman (2001), however, suggests they are flawed methods which assume a degree of fixation (as opposed to fluidity) of data and meaning that would yield similar results when looked at from different perspectives and that could be corrected by interviewees. Triangulation appears to be a method for generating more complex theoretical explanations, but it is insufficient to 'prove' the existence of the problems we are trying to explain. Likewise, respondent validation can be used to identify new paths for exploration rather than for 'correcting' interpretations. Both methods are 'yet another source of data' (Silverman 2001:177) rather than means for verification.

For Silverman (2001), validity, which he closely relates to avoiding the risk of anecdotalism or un-credible accommodation of data, can be achieved through a combination of strategies such as explicit attempts to refute or falsify theories, constant comparison, comprehensive (rather than merely selective) data treatment, deviant case analysis and use of appropriate tabulation. Reliability, on the other hand, could be attained by making our thought processes and methodological decisions evident, and also by providing access to our data so that others can see whether our analyses offer plausible explanations.

In an attempt to develop specific quality criteria for qualitative research by incorporating several perspective on the issue, Steinke (2004) proposes the following: inter-subjective comprehensibility, rather than inter-subjective verifiability of accounts (as is used in quantitative research with, for instance, inter-coder reliability), and which can be likened to criteria of plausibility; indication of the research process; empirical foundation (or groundedness in data) of theories and hypotheses – this is a characteristic of empirical qualitative research; making the limits of interpretations explicit; coherence of the accounts offered; relevance of the accounts; and reflected subjectivity, as discussed in the opening pages (see Rose 1997).

I see Silverman's and Steinke's criteria as complementary and sometimes overlapping. While Silverman focuses more on the procedures through which we can make our analyses credible, Steinke focuses more on the overall comprehensibility,

coherence and plausibility of our accounts, and also on the more pragmatic criteria of usefulness of explanations.

In various ways which I have more or less already discussed throughout this chapter I have tried to satisfy some or most of these criteria. I expect in general that the overall account I have presented of the problem of discontinuity, both in relation to existing literature and as part of a theoretical perspective will appear not only credible and plausible, but also useful when thinking about the problems that education policy making faces in Peru, and possibly beyond there, in other countries in the region and in the developing world. The same goes for the explanations I offer.

Throughout this chapter I have tried to satisfy the demand for reflexivity in relation to the methodological choices I have made along the research process. Moreover, being conscious of the need to provide the reader with the possibility of judging whether my interpretations seem plausible, coherent and credible, I am including some interview transcripts as annexes and would make all of them available on demand.

The risk of anecdotalism is something I am still unsure of having adequately overcome and I think that in the last instance the reader will have to determine whether my accounts are prey to it. As much as I have actually carried out a comprehensive, rather than merely selective, analysis of the data, I cannot see how to avoid some of this risk when presenting the analysis in a final written form in which much of my actual thinking process has been flattened for the sake of coherence. I have tried to minimise this risk partly by providing access to the data itself, by supporting the presentation of the data through theoretical considerations, and by exploring different perspectives – such as through the combination of thematic and narrative analysis. But, as I already said, it is in the eyes of the reader where it will become evident whether I have achieved to do this sufficiently or not. A few final notes on the research process as such, and the ways in which I have developed the account I propose in the following chapters might actually help this.

6.8 ON RESEARCH AS AN ABDUCTIVE PROCESS

The study I have carried out has been largely exploratory and the methods and results are closely related to this. As shown in the opening chapters, the issue of education policy discontinuity was largely untheorised, to the point where its existence as a (researchable) problem was still unclear. The literature suggested it in

various ways, but in such a fuzzy manner that the main task of the research can be said to have been the definition of the problem as to allow for the development of explanations and of further research in the area. In this sense, the process I have followed seems to match the idea that:

‘because our most important research problems will be decidedly ill-structured, we can say that the basic task of scientific inquiry is to better structure our research problems, by building in the various required constraints [that define the problem] as our research proceeds’ (Haig 1995)

Throughout this study the problem of education policy discontinuity has moved from being fuzzy and ill-structured to a more well-structured definition. This, I believe, is the main contribution of the study. Achieving a better definition of the problem has been intimately linked to the development of theoretical explanations. The latter have been formed largely through a process of abduction or retroduction (Génova 1996; Haig 1995; Reichertz 2004; Wirth 1999), where looking at the problem from various perspectives led to the definition of certain hypotheses which were then further explored and in some cases abandoned or refined.

The initial research proposal was based on the idea that discontinuity could or should be researched through a focus on a specific policy area. I had thus proposed focusing on secondary education curriculum policies, but as the research developed I abandoned this idea in favour of a concentration on cultures and perspectives on policy making, which seemed fitter to explore and explain discontinuity. During the process of analysis, the move from a thematic analysis to a combination of this with a focus on policy making narratives was also a crucial stage of redefinition. Here, some of the initial thematic lines of analysis were abandoned in favour of a focus only on issues related to the institutional framework of policy making, as, together with the analysis of narratives they seemed to offer a good picture of the problem of discontinuity. These choices have not been at all unproblematic, and have involved leaving out things that could have led to a more complex or better analysis, all for the sake of a more coherent theoretical approach to the problem of discontinuity.

At each stage of the development of the theorisation I present here, the process I followed described an abductive form of reasoning. Initially, a series of seemingly interrelated issues in education policy making suggested the existence of an underlying problem which I termed discontinuity. I tentatively hypothesised that discontinuity was a problem and followed this lead to see whether it could serve as an explanation for certain aspects of education policy making. When this lead

seemed to yield results I started exploring further, trying to identify the possible causes of the problem of discontinuity. The focus on institutional elements, on the rules of the game of education policy making seemed to be an obvious lead, which I explored through the data and a combination of theoretical ideas (on the state and education, policy making etc.). But at some point in the analysis this lead appeared to be insufficient, and a related but at the same time new form of analysis was developed which links the institutional framework to the existence of cultures of policy making that not only emerge from those institutional arrangements, but also help to reproduce them and the problem of discontinuity in education policies.

The ideas I present in the following chapters are the outcome of this process of coming and going, of permanent redefinition, and in which various emerging hypotheses have been explored, some abandoned and some refined. It is a process that resembles depictions of scientific procedure in terms of abduction that is, as a process of reasoning in which plausible theories have been developed and explored as to offer a better definition of the research problem. In this process, new explanations did not 'emerge' from the data alone, nor were they deducted from a particular theory. They were actually abducted, drawn, advanced, by looking at the data, negotiating previous theories and hypothesising about the meaning of what I was looking at. Rather than beginning with a hypothesis, I ended up with one, that is, with an explanation of things of which I initially knew very little as to have clear-cut questions and which I could then explore and refine. Like any explanation, mine, of course, are also temporary, contestable, and at most probable.

PART III - THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

The following chapters aim to provide the theoretical grounding for the analysis of discontinuity. The chapters offer a critical review of relevant literature and provide indications about the theoretical views taken for the analysis of discontinuity. Although most of the discussion is theoretical, some of the chapters blend into the discussion what could be considered 'background' issues, in which available theories are used to analyse particular developments in Peru. Presenting these issues as part of the theoretical discussion helps ground theoretical explanations in the more specific developments that are the focus of the research.

The discussion is organised into two main sections: one which focuses on the relations between the state and education, and another which looks more specifically at issues of policy making and analysis. The first section opens up with a chapter on theories of the state, in which a review of various perspectives on the state is presented. This discussion closes with a series of reflections about state autonomy and legitimacy, which aim to offer an understanding of power issues in the organisation of societies and states. These first chapters pave the way for a presentation of the paths to state development in Peru, which is fundamental for understanding the role of education in state development and consequently the problem of discontinuity in education policy making.

The initial chapters constitute a fundamental building block to then move onto more specific considerations about education and state relations. Here, a strategy similar to that offered in the initial chapters is followed. A broad review of perspectives for analysing state and education relations leads to a series of more specific considerations of the role of education in the development of the Peruvian state, and the implications this has for the making of education policies.

The chapters that make part of this first section aim to define the fundamental theoretical grounds on which the analysis of discontinuity will move. Considerations about state development and the role of education therein set the focus on some of the structural socio-political issues in which the problem of discontinuity is embedded.

The second section moves into a discussion of perspectives on policy making and analysis. A series of approaches is considered: beginning with the more classical technicist approaches, going through those that view policy making as a largely

political process and arriving at the more critical perspectives that have been influenced by post-empiricist and post-structuralist ideas. This leads to the presentation of an approach to policy making as a deliberative process, which is closely linked to notions of democratic politics as tied to giving reasons and inviting questions in relations to one's actions.

CHAPTER 7 – UNDERSTANDING THE STATE

The distribution and access to power in society is one of the central issues on which state theories are grounded. Variations in perspective, which give rise to all the range of theories, from Marxism to Liberalism, stem from different conceptions about the way in which power is distributed within specific societal systems. Problems faced in the governance of education systems – such as discontinuity - are closely related to state characteristics, which explain the particular ways in which policies are conducted. Analysing the effects that different state configurations have on policy making is a permanent feature of 'education policy sociology' (Hatcher *et al.* 1994:83), largely because theories about decision and policy making need to be reinterpreted or adapted 'in terms of different formal political structures' (Hall in Ball *et al.* 1994:47) in order to explain specific policy problems. The present section aims at offering such an adaptation of state theories for an understanding of the Peruvian state so as to explain the problem of discontinuity in education policies.

State theories like those of Marxism and liberalism (and their 'neo' versions) have been developed on the basis of considerations about fully capitalist nations. Analyses of power distribution have therefore been based on considerations about class societies and on the possibilities they offer for equal access to power and resources. Such theories can be described as 'society centred', as the understanding they offer of the state stems from the way in which they understand social relations (Evans *et al.* 1985). More recently, social theorists have advocated the need to adapt state theories to different contexts, taking into account the different paths that the development of state systems has followed in different social formations, and which seem to determine the degrees of autonomy and legitimacy of state action (Evans *et al.* 1985). This view is based on a critical appraisal of the generalising pretensions of such grand theories as Marxism and Liberalism, which tend to overlook variations in different states' characteristics and forms of involvement in national development. It underscores the fact that the elements that determine a state's strength and capacities might vary greatly from one country to another, and tend to be the

outcome of specific combinations of cultural, historical, social, economic and geographical variables, which have to be incorporated in theoretical explanations.

Apart from this focus on power, a different approach to the analysis of state action stems from Weber's ideas, which focus on the institutional and organisational characteristics of the state apparatus. The suggestion that such grand theories need to be adapted to account for variations in specific state formations applies in this case too, as the organisational capacities, weaknesses and strengths of the state are also contingent on historical developments. This criticism, as will be shown below, is especially relevant for this study, given the particularities of the Peruvian state system, especially as compared to states in fully capitalist nations.

The following pages will deal with these approaches in more detail. This will be the basis for a more contextualised account of the Peruvian state which will open the way for considerations about the role played by public education in its development and about policy making in education.

7.1 THE STATE AND SOCIETY

Society-centred views of the state, in which the form of the latter is derived from assumptions about the organisation and spread of power in society have predominated in political theory until fairly recently (Evans *et al.* 1985). What follows is a discussion of two contrasting society-centred views of the state, Marxism and Liberalism/Pluralism, which have defined some of the main issues that should be considered when thinking about the relations between state characteristics, education and policy making.

7.1.1 Marxism and the state

By establishing links between the state and the economy Marxist theory greatly contributed to our way of thinking about the state (Jessop 1990). Marxist historical analyses of modern states, show how the 'emancipation of private property from the community' leads the state to become 'the guarantor of private property and legal contract' (Green 1990:83), and thus of the interests of capital owners. 'The state may appear to be independent, to stand above particular interests and treat all subjects

as equal before the law, but this neutrality only serves to mask the reproduction of substantive social inequalities which the state underwrites through its protection of private property' (Green 1990:82). In this view,

‘the material conditions of society [appear] as the basis of its social structure and of human consciousness. The form of the State... emerges from the relations of production, not from the general development of the human minds or from collective men’s wills’³¹ (Carnoy 1984:46).

This association between the state and the economy is, according to many critics, a strong limitation of Marxist theory. It often amounts to a form of economic reductionism that ignores the ‘complexity of the relations between the economy, class and political representation in model social formations’ (Carnoy 1984:85) and sees the state in purely instrumental terms as serving the interests of capital. It also leads the classical version of Marxism to exclude considerations about other forms of oppression, such as those based on ethnic and gender differences (cfr. Burris 1987).

The Gramscian concept of ‘hegemony’ seems better at grasping such complex relations (Carnoy 1984; Green 1990). In Gramsci’s view, the state, rather than directly and exclusively representing the interest of capital owners, performs a series of ‘complex processes of mediation and alliance which are irreducible to particular economic contradictions’ (Green 1990:92). Hegemony refers to ‘the ideological predominance of bourgeois values and norms over the subordinate classes’ (Carnoy 1984:66). It ‘represents a form of class power that is maintained not only by coercive means but also by the winning of consent for it in civil society’ (Green 1990:94). The gaining of consent through hegemony seems to account for the collusion of classes with regimes that do not seem to protect their interests. Rather than being directly subordinated to the interests of the bourgeoisie, the state appears subordinated to the capitalist order, on which its own existence depends and which, therefore, it has to maintain.

In this view, as in the original Marxist formulations, state autonomy appears to be very restricted. The state is seen either as an instrument of the bourgeoisie or as the guardian of the capitalist order (Evans *et al.* 1985). As Evans and others (1985) have shown, such society- centred assumptions – in which states seem ‘inherently shaped by class struggles and function to preserve and expand modes of production’ (p.5) – prevail even in the more recent ideas of Neo-Marxist thinkers, who often fail to account for variations in state autonomy and for instances in which states can

³¹ The latter view being associated with the Hegelian and the Lockean conceptions of the state.

effectively intervene in society for the pursuit of common social objectives – this point will be further discussed below. The criticism is aimed at the negative view of the state that stems from these conceptions. In the Marxist view, the state seems unable to introduce social change through policy making because its major commitment is to favour capital owners by maintaining existing social divisions.

A further limitation of Marxist conceptions of the state – which is perhaps more relevant for the present research – is the almost exclusive focus on ‘the capitalist state’, which has led to the assumption that the ‘features and functions’ of such states are ‘shared by *all* states’ (Evans *et al.* 1985:5). This limitation stems mainly from the lack of comparative analysis, and often leads to generalisations which are not necessarily applicable to non-Western states (Evans *et al.* 1985).

7.1.2 Liberal and pluralist views on the state

Contrary to the Marxist view of the state, liberal theory, and ‘its outgrowth, pluralism’ can be defined as ‘the official ideology of capitalist democracies’ (Carnoy 1984:33, 10). The main difference between liberal and Marxist state theories lies in their view of the relations between the state and the economy. Whereas in the Marxist perspective the state appears to have a meagre degree of autonomy from the pressures of capital, in the liberal view the state is – or can/should be – a more or less neutral arbiter in charge of creating the conditions for capital accumulation. In this, liberals follow Adam Smith’s idea that ‘the role of the State that would best serve humankind was one that relied on and guaranteed the operation of a free market in civil society’ (Carnoy 1984:13). In this view, ‘the role of the State was at best peripheral to the principal social dynamic – the “invisible hand” of the free market’ (Carnoy 1984:26).

This contrasts sharply with the neo-Marxist view, in which the capitalist system is inseparable from the creation of social inequalities, for liberals, particularly in Adam Smith’s view, the pursuit of individual wellbeing entails also the maximization of collective wellbeing. The state’s role is thus to facilitate individuals’ natural economic behaviour.

The link between liberal state theory and pluralism (the latter referring more specifically to a form of government), derives from the liberal concern with the possible excesses of the state in relation to the economy. The liberal view holds that the state should not intervene in the economy beyond the creation of the legal

framework for the proper operation of the market. A pluralist or democratic system seems to provide the best way for restraining the possible excesses of the state 'by giving the citizenry power to change... [government] officials at the general will' (Carnoy 1984:32).

The main problem with such a system is that there is no guarantee that particular interests (such as those of the working class) would not want to hinder the natural operation of the market. In relation to this, Schumpeter (in Carnoy 1984) posed 'an alternative model' in which the 'deciding of issues by the electorate' appears as 'secondary to the election of representatives who are to do the deciding' (p.35). This guarantees that the electorate would not have excessive capacities that might allow it to overturn the whole system of capital accumulation. Furthermore, the election of representatives gives legitimacy to the state but also autonomy to the elected representatives in decision-making.

Although there are some important variations – like those stemming from corporatism and neo-pluralism – the policy process in the pluralist view is the more or less straight forward action of accountable elected representatives who channel citizens' needs.

7.1.3 States as organisations

Also in contrast to the Marxist view in which states appear as 'a mere arena in which social groups make demands and engage in political struggles or compromises' (Evans *et al.* 1985:8), but also different to the pluralist perspective is the view of states as organisations that exert control over a territory and which are conceptually distinct from the economy and society. As shown by Evans *et al.* (1985) much contemporary research emphasizing the role of states is based on such ideas. The latter, as seen particularly in the thought of Weber, insist 'on the institutional reality of the state and its continuing impact on and within civil society' (Evans *et al.* 1985:7). In Weber's own words, modern states are characterised for having 'an administrative and legal order' which 'claims binding authority, not only over the members of the state, the citizens..., but also to a very large extent, over all action taking place in the area of its jurisdiction' (Stepan 1978: xi)

Such a view extends the notion of the state beyond government and the political system and points towards an organisational continuity that is related to the pursuit of goals that are largely independent from specific economical interests. The state thus consists of

‘the continuous administrative, legal, bureaucratic and coercive systems that attempt not only to structure relationships *between* civil society and public authority in a polity but also to structure many crucial relationships within civil society as well’ (Stepan in: Evans *et al.* 1985:7).

‘States conceived as organizations claiming control over territories and people may formulate and pursue goals that are not simply reflective of the demands or interests of social groups, classes, or society’ (Evans *et al.* 1985:9). With the development of such organisational capacities – that are associated with the rise of capitalism –, the state considerably gains in autonomy with respect to political and particular social interests. The state is thus seen as an actor that has social control and authoritative decision making and policy implementation capacities and which has an inherent interest in expanding its scope for autonomous action.

‘[T]he gain in autonomy and subjectivity may’, however, remain ‘fictive and nominal insofar as it is neutralized by countertendencies of the “administrative world”. (...) The *inefficacy* of the order and steering mechanisms is, next to the *losses of freedom*, the other frustrating basic experience that modern societies have of themselves’ (Offe 1996:14).

Considering the autonomy of states from the pressures of specific groups has led proponents of this perspective to focus on the analysis of states’ strengths, which is understood in terms of their organisational capacities and their ability to ‘work their will efficiently’ (Evans *et al.* 1985:351). This is generally seen as dependent on the organisational characteristics of the state, which should be as close as possible to a ‘fully rational bureaucracy’. State capacities and strength are thus assessed in terms of ‘specific organisational structures’, the presence of which is dependent on specific and historical state development paths.

The relevance of these ideas for the present discussion is that they introduce a view of the state as an apparatus capable of steering society and which can not only act independently or autonomously from political pressures but which can structure economic and social relationships. The degree to which such autonomous capacities are effectively exercised will vary from one state to the other and can be seen as a measure of state strength. This view of states as organisations ‘leads us away from basic features common to all polities and toward consideration of the various ways in which state structures and actions are conditioned by historically changing transnational contexts’ (Evans *et al.* 1985:8). This is a considerable advantage in

comparison to Marxist ideas on the 'capitalist state', particularly when other state forms are considered.

7.1.4 Contextualised and state-centred views

Recent efforts to re-theorise the state take into account contributions and criticisms of both society-centred theories of the state and those that emphasise the state's organisational capacities and autonomy. Such ideas are incorporated in attempts to offer a more complete view of states and their variations in which there is an explicit attempt to 'analyze states in relation to socioeconomic and sociocultural contexts' (Evans *et al.* 1985:20). These views attempt to explain the way in which power is distributed in specific societies, the degree of state autonomy and the capacity of different states to organise society – generally and in relation to specific policy areas. Proponents of this view attempt to go beyond the limitations of the Marxist focus on class to incorporate reflections on other sources of social inequality, such as geographical and cultural factors³².

The idea of 'bringing the state back in' to political and policy related research does not necessarily imply the attribution of an exaggerate role to the state or to its capacities to organise society free from political influence. This perspective acknowledges that 'no matter how appropriate (...) autonomous state activity might be, it can never really be "disinterested" in any meaningful sense. (...) autonomous state actions will regularly take forms that attempt to reinforce the authority, political longevity, and social control of the state organizations...' (Evans *et al.* 1985:15).

However, state-centred views highlight the centrality of the state for explanations about variations in the making and implementation of policies, even in spite of current national and international trends in which states seem to be losing control both to international policy agencies and, internally, to decentralised institutions and civil society organisations (Hobson *et al.* 2002; Pierre and Peters 2000). The main idea in such views is that policy outputs can also be the product of states themselves, rather than the product of forces within society. This has definite implications for research on policy making, since it shifts the focus of analysis to the existing capacities of states for achieving policy goals and to the impact that states have in the definition and implementation of policies.

³² In this sense the view is closer to neo-Marxist developments, which as shown by Burris (1987), have gone considerably beyond the formulations of original Marxist theory on the prevalence of class as a source of explanation for social inequalities.

Such a change of focus has led to the development of a body of comparative research that casts light into different possible state configurations, and on how the latter can affect the capacity of states to organise society and pursue policy goals. Apart from confirming the view that there are considerable variations in the way states are configured and in their operation through policy (even among capitalist states), such research has also shown the existence of variations within states. According to this view, state strength and capacities can vary from one policy area to another – something that seems especially relevant for some of the issues that this study wants to raise, and which make discontinuity in *education* policies a distinct phenomenon.

Advocates of ‘bringing the state back in’ suggest that different solutions are required for different contexts and that such solutions should take into account state characteristics. Policies that have been successful in East Asian countries, for instance, which have often been taken as examples of successful economic and educational development might not be suitable for other contexts, like Latin America, where the capacity of the state to lead economic and educational development can be more reduced.

The theoretical and methodological relevance of these more contextualised and state-centred views for the analysis of education policy making in Peru seems particularly high. This perspective shows how different forms of state organisation can lead to different capacities in policy making. The success of education policies might depend on issues like state legitimacy, strength and on the state’s position in front of international influences. Before going deeper into a discussion of the characteristics of state action in Peru and its effects on education policy and the lack of continuity therein some of the central elements of the state that have been discussed earlier – and which will serve as analytical tools for understanding education policy making in Peru – will be considered in more detail.

7.2 STATE AUTONOMY AND LEGITIMACY

The legitimacy of state action, which seems to be a necessary condition for the capacity of the state to introduce policies (if not for the existence of the state altogether), appears to be closely related to the existence – at least in appearance – of state autonomy. If states are seen to pursue actions oriented to benefit only a small part of society they lose strength. Legitimacy, then, seems a fundamental

determinant of state strength, which in this case refers, largely, to the existence of a necessary base of support that is required for state action to be effective.

Although Gramsci continued in the original Marxist line of thought in which state autonomy was seen as being very reduced, his elaboration of the concept of hegemony introduced a further and much necessary degree of complexity to the way in which the state gains consent for its actions in civil society (legitimacy). This happens not only through coercion but by the spread of values related to a predominant way of social organisation, which then makes the state's role in the preservation of the capitalist mode of production appear as entirely legitimate. In this more subtle way of gaining consent the state cannot take care directly of specific capitalist interests, because this would undermine its legitimacy, an idea further elaborated by Offe (1996).

Similarly, although from a much more rigid structuralist (deterministic) position, Althusser introduced the concept of 'relative autonomy', which again, in the line of Gramsci, questions the direct link between capitalist interests and state action established in original Marxist ideas. The relative autonomy of the state (of politics and ideology) from the economic base suggests that the relation between the state and capital is much more indirect and subtle than had been initially acknowledged by Marx. For Althusser, however, although the state is not an instrument of particular economic interests, the form of the state is determined by the class structure.

Neo-Marxist thinkers have reworked ideas on autonomy and legitimacy and have tried to elaborate a more complete account of capitalist states. Influenced by both Gramsci and Weber, Offe (in: Carnoy 1984) has argued that 'the capitalist State is "independent" of any systematic capitalist-class control, either direct or structural, but ...[it] represents capitalist's interests anyway, because it depends on capital accumulation for its continued existence as a State' (p.6). According to Offe, the relation between the state and capitalist interests is much more indirect than was suggested by Gramsci. This leaves sufficient space for the development of an autonomous administrative apparatus such as that described by Weber. The state however, is inextricably linked to the maintenance of the capitalist system; its existence depends on capital accumulation (for tax revenue). However, the role of the state in the maintenance of such a system needs to be independent from particular economic interests. The state has to act as a mediator between competing capitals in order to ensure that they do not annihilate each other, that is, that the basic conditions for capital accumulation are preserved. This view is opposed to both instrumentalist (i.e. Marx) and constraint (i.e. Althusser) theories of state action,

which 'assume that the action of the state (policy-making) is externally determined', thus giving 'public policy its capitalist content' (Carnoy 1984:132).

Similarly, although more influenced by the structuralist work of Althusser, Poulantzas suggests that 'the State in the capitalist mode of production is "determined" in fulfilling ... [the reproduction of the class structure], not by direct control of the capitalist class, but rather by the *class nature* of the ideological and State apparatuses (Carnoy 1984:125). In the same line, Offe argues that the aim of the State is to maintain the capitalist mode of production, which thus implies that 'Accumulation acts as the most powerful constraint criterion (but not necessarily as the determinant of content) of the policy-making process' (134).

The pursuit of such an aim creates a strong tension at the core of the state which is resolved, by both Offe and Poulantzas through the concept of legitimacy. Sustained capital accumulation implies the continued existence of the basic social inequalities that lie at the core of the capitalist mode of production. This raises the question of how the state can gain general consent from society in order to pursue such a goal. Offe's and Poulantzas' answers go back to Gramsci's ideas on how the state gains consent in civil society through the operation of ideological apparatuses. But, particularly in the case of Offe, this is complemented by a more Weberian view in which the state gains legitimacy 'by mass participation in the selection of its personnel' (i.e. democracy) (Carnoy 1984:134). The state not only needs to be apparently autonomous, it needs to really be so –as much as possible- through the maintenance of an administrative apparatus that is independent from particular needs.

In order 'to be legitimate, the capitalist State must appear to allow (unlike private production) equal access to power and to be responsive to all groups in society' (Carnoy 1984:134). This legitimacy is not only gained through ideological means, but also through concrete actions related to the socialisation or redistribution of capital gains. The inability to do this would strongly undermine the legitimacy of the state³³.

However, since in the last stance the aim is still to promote capital accumulation there is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of the state system, a system that needs to be ('objectively') autonomous but cannot be so completely (see Codd *et al.* 1997). 'The capitalist State is constantly trying to reconcile and make compatible the need to maintain both accumulation and legitimacy with its internal structure, or

³³ This idea, which will be further explored later, has important consequences for understanding problems in the legitimacy of state action in very unequal societies where the state seems to be unable to adequately redistribute economic gains.

mode of operation (bureaucracy)' (Carnoy 1984:139). "[T]he State can only *function* as a capitalist state by appealing to symbols and sources of support that *conceal* its nature as a capitalist state" (p.134). "The reality of the capitalist state can thus be described as the reality (and dominance) of an unrealistic attempt" (Carnoy 1984:139/140).

In this view, although the state, in the last stance, aims to guarantee the capitalist mode of production, it has to enjoy a considerable freedom (autonomy) of action precisely to achieve this aim. Although Jessop (1990) also recognises the fundamental contradiction at the core of the state, he shows that the emergence of a nation-state not only 'corresponds to the need for an 'ideal collective capitalist'', but it

'also implies the existence of a national or popular interest that reflects the common interest of all its citizens regardless of their class membership. This is alleged to sustain the belief in a neutral state able to reconcile class antagonisms and thus to facilitate the rule of capital...' (p.43).

In what Carnoy (1984) calls the 'German debate' on the nature of the state, Hirsch goes further than Offe in his conception of the role of the state as a guarantor of the capitalist system. Hirsch's focus is set on 'how the nature of State intervention will *change* over time as capital changes the nature of reproduction of accumulation' (Carnoy 1984:147). This offers a much more dynamic account of the changing nature of the role of the state in the maintenance of the capitalist system. Carnoy criticises the 'German debate' for its lack of attention to the ideological and repressive functions of the state, which he sees as being better developed by Poulantzas. Even in Offe's view, legitimacy is seen to depend 'solely on material gains by the working class' (p.149), rather than in the maintenance of a set of cultural values that support the capitalist system, as Gramsci and later Poulantzas argued³⁴.

Although Offe's, Poulantzas', Hirsch's and Jessop's views on how the capitalist state works are still on the Marxist tradition and are thus critical of liberal views of the state, their ideas seem to explain how the state proposed by liberals and pluralists can sustain itself. From the pluralist perspective, however, the way in which the state gains legitimacy has nothing to do with hegemony or the spread of dominant values. On the contrary, as already mentioned, legitimacy is gained through the operation of a democratic system that imposes limitations on state actions by selecting representatives and establishing mechanisms for their accountability to the citizens that elected them. The contradiction identified by Offe at the heart of the capitalist

³⁴ Bourdieu's (1997) analysis of cultural and social reproduction would be more in this second line of thought.

state seems to disappear in this view since there is no inherent contradiction between individual and collective wealth maximising behaviour.

Although the more recent Marxist and pluralist theorists have incorporated many of the criticisms formulated in relation to their original theoretical frameworks and offer a more complex view of the way in which capitalist states function, they still incur some of the problems identified by Evans and others (1985). For one thing they all refer to capitalist states, assuming that there is a continuity of meaning in relation to what a capitalist state is. But for defenders of a more contextualised theorisation of the state, 'the very *structural potentials* for autonomous state actions change over time, as the organizations of coercion and administration undergo transformations, both internally and in the relations to social groups and to representative parts of government' (Evans *et al.* 1985:14)³⁵. Something similar can be said about the development of state legitimacy, quite obviously because of its links with state autonomy, but also because the processes by which legitimacy can be acquired are diverse and are related to the social and historical processes that have accompanied state development³⁶.

This view opens the possibility (and stresses the need) to think about the variations in what the 'capitalist state' is. Rather than trying to identify stabilities in the functioning of such states the view focuses on the discontinuities within the more or less stable role of the state described by both neo-Marxist and pluralist or neo-pluralist thinkers. The aim of such a perspective is to incorporate in the analysis of states elements of the socio-historical conditions that help define and explain the form of state action. Even within the more traditional Western capitalist states there are differences in the form of state action and in the way in which the state responds or relates to the class structure of the society in which it operates³⁷. Such analyses show that 'the "classness" of politics also varies in relation to states, for the degree to which (and the forms in which) class interests are organized into national politics depends very much on the prevailing political culture, forms of collective action, and possibilities for raising and resolving broadly collective (societal or class) issues' (Evans *et al.* 1985:25).

³⁵ A view that seems somewhat better represented by Hirsch.

³⁶ Certain manifestations of populism, for instance, seem to base their legitimacy not on the formulation of better and more socially relevant policies but on a particular form of relation between the leader and the masses which is both far from the rational processes supported by Weber and from the finely attuned balancing state role proposed by neo-Marxists. This will be further discussed later.

³⁷ Katzenstein (1985) for instance, analyses the different roles taken by the state in small European countries like Austria and Switzerland.

These considerations seem particularly relevant for the analysis of the characteristics of state action in Peru, especially in relation to the making and implementation of education policies, where state action seems to be particularly weak and prone to discontinuity. In the following pages the ideas on the state that have been discussed up to now will be used to analyse some of the characteristics of the Peruvian state which seem to explain some of the problems found at the level of education policy making.

7.3 THE STATE AND SOCIETY IN PERU

Following the discussion above the present section introduces some of the central characteristics of the Peruvian state with a focus on the distribution of power, state autonomy and legitimacy, and the organisational (administrative capacities and institutions) characteristic of the state apparatus. This discussion, as the section's title anticipates, is based on an understanding of state and society relations. As will be seen in the following chapter, these issues are crucial for understanding the problem of discontinuity, as the latter is fundamentally related to the characteristics of the state's institutional matrix, and the rules of the game it sets for the actions of policy makers. Interpreting the way in which policy makers approach the education policy process, moreover, is inextricably linked to the ways in which access to power and public positions has been understood throughout Peru's Republican history.

Rather than an exhaustive account of state and society relations, which is beyond the scope of this work and has been carried out elsewhere (cfr. Lopez 1997), the presentation will be concise and will focus on those aspects that are crucial for the analysis of discontinuity in education policies that is the aim of this study.

7.3.1 Brief historical account of the development of the Peruvian state

The present characteristics of the Peruvian state and its institutions could not be understood without considering the particular development path it has followed since the country's independence from Spanish colonial powers in 1821. The Republic had a turbulent start, and its first decades in the XIX century, up until the time of the Chilean war at the end of the century, have been described as '*caudillismo*', a time when military leaders (*caudillos*) fought over governmental power. More important than the specificities of this era in terms of the political struggles, is, for the purposes of this study, what happened in terms of state development and the distribution of power after independence.

In this sense it should be highlighted that the independence process, in Peru as well as in the rest of the region, was led by local white Spanish descendent elites, and was not the product of an indigenous movement. When independence was finally achieved, this led to the replacement of the colonial powers with local elites, and that did not entail a deep modification of the internal social and political structure. External colonialism, then, gave way to a period that has been characterised as one

of internal colonialism, where the local elites controlled the still incipient state apparatus (cfr. Lopez 1997). The lack of separation between public and private interests that was associated with this form of power distribution, meant that the first decades of the Republic did not achieve much in terms of the development of state institutions. The war with Chile (1879-1884) put an end to the era of military leaderships, but again without any modification of the country's social and political structure. What was installed then was the 'oligarchic state', which would last until the second half of the XXth century.

Lopez (1997) defines the main characteristics of the *oligarchic state* as 'racial and ethnic exclusion, patrimonialism, political mediation with local landowners and factionalist violence' (p.125). It was a state that led a half-way modernisation process that did not 'substantially modify relations of authority nor the stratified social relations' (p.125)³⁸ that prevailed in the country. In spite of all these characteristics, which distanced the Peruvian state from more modern socio-political formations, the *oligarchic state* did advance some way towards the consolidation of state institutions, particularly when it is compared to the first decades of the Republic in which internal conflicts and competition between military leaders completely hindered state development. The *oligarchic state*, which, as the name suggests, was controlled by small elitist political organisations, did promote some 'centralisation of authority, without fully achieving it, and promoted an incipient specialization of some of its institutions', accomplishing a 'relatively institutionalised construction of order' (Lopez 1997:126). The state however, did not develop towards a well consolidated organisational body nor towards strong social and political institutions.

As Lopez (1997) highlights, the *oligarchic state* was 'the more or less centralised political and institutional form that the state assumed in peripheral countries during the capitalist phase of raw material and food exports, when the latter was in the hands of lordly elites' (p.127). The form of state power that prevailed during this time was not based on a direct relation of authority between the state and citizens, but rather on an intricate patrimonial and clientelist form of relation, more similar to the feudal mode of socio-political organisation than to that of modern states. The authority of the state over citizens was mediated by local landowners (*gamonales*), with which the state exchanged loyalty for favours – i.e. the protection of the structure of land ownership.

³⁸ All translations from Lopez are my own.

The prevalence of the *oligarchic* state was, however, not without changes. The organisational continuity of its first decades, known as the 'aristocratic republic' (Basadre, quoted in Lopez 1997), experienced a first transformation during the eleven years of Leguia's dictatorship (1919-1930), which somewhat strengthened state autonomy but again without a substantial social transformation. But the main changes were to come between 1950 and 1968, and then between 1968 and 1975. In the first of these periods changes were led by the middle and popular classes that emerged from the incipient modernization process, which demanded some basic socio-political transformations. The main achievements during this time, which did not, however, put an end to the *oligarchic state*, were changes in the use of violence, which stopped being in the hands of landowners and became the exclusive monopoly of the state;

'in the composition of the dominant oligarchic coalition, ...which opened up to the middle classes; a partial opening of political participation due to an increase in literacy levels; and a political and social weakening of landowners, which reduced their capacity to mediate the relations between the state and society' (Lopez 1997:247).

All the changes described above were progressive and socially led. In contrast, the second period of change was not only more aggressive, and led to the final demise of the *oligarchic state*, but was also a state-led experience (cfr. Stepan 1978) promoted by the military dictatorship of General Velasco Alvarado (1968-1975). General Velasco came into government through a *coup-d'etat* to the first government of Fernando Belaunde, who had not managed to deliver the social and political changes he promised when he got in power and which were being demanded by the population. Velasco established a form of government that has been characterised as 'organic statism', with an inclusive 'corporatist character' (Stepan 1978). It came into power with a program of deep structural changes which aimed at changing the country's social structure through the implementation of agrarian, educational and political reforms. In this sense, General Velasco's government changed the patterns of landownership – on which much of the distribution of power and social exclusion were based – and attempted to create a more united social structure by carrying out an education reform which focused on the development of a national identity. Velasco's government also aimed at changing the country's economic structure by promoting industrial development; and it encouraged the formation of local organisations (e.g. peasant communities) that would guarantee better delivery of state policies at all levels.

The success of these reforms is relative. The military government can be credited with having actually changed the socio-economic structure of the country and with putting an end to the *oligarchic state* which was hindering a more thorough modernization process. On the other hand, however, the initial strength of the reformist impulse was progressively lost, especially after general Velasco was succeeded in government by General Morales Bermudez, who failed to institutionalise the reforms promoted during the first half of the decade and finally led the country back to democracy calling elections in 1980.

The governmental period that followed the military dictatorship of the 1970's saw the return of the president who had been overturned by Velasco's coup, and who finished administering the dismantling of the reforms. In a process similar to what has taken place in more recent years, in the transition between the government of Alberto Fujimori and that of Alejandro Toledo – which are at the centre of this study -, the newly elected democratic government built its legitimacy partly in contraposition to the authoritarian characteristics of the preceding government, and therefore found it necessary to put an end to the reform processes the latter had begun. As Lopez (1997) highlights, however, this dismantling was 'more juridical and political than social' (p.280) – the social changes brought about by the military government, although not enhanced in the expected ways, were to be long-lasting and completely changed the social face of the country. Responsibility for the progressive dismantling of the military government's reforms is, however, also attributable to the military government itself, to the strongly ideological character of the reforms, to the closed process through which the reforms were developed, and especially to the failure of the government to institutionalise the reforms promoted during its first stage³⁹.

The return to democratic government in the eighties was initially accompanied by a shift towards a market economy and form of government that replaced the organic statism of the military years. The government's liberal project experienced serious limitations due to the difficulties in balancing internal demands for better redistributive policies with external demands from multilateral agencies, for debt repayment – the government's discipline to repay the debt led it to commit 43percent of the fiscal budget (Lopez 1997:286), considerably reducing its capacity for internal investment. In addition to this, 1983 saw the coming of a particularly strong 'El Niño' phenomenon, with devastating floods in the North and droughts in the South of the

³⁹ A more detailed account of the reforms carried out by the military government and the processes that led to their initial success and later dismissal can be found in Stepan (1978). Haddad (1994) offers a detailed analysis of the education reforms promoted by the military government, with a focus on policy making processes that echoes and supports some of the ideas that will be presented in the next chapter.

country, which ended up weakening the national economy and any possibility of consolidating the political and economic changes that the government wanted to promote.

The second half of the 80's saw the return of populism, thus confirming the trend described by Gonzales de Olarte and Samame (1991) as the 'Peruvian pendulum' – a trend which according to the authors has characterised the Peruvian political-economy since the early 1960's, and in which the failure to establish liberal economic regimes due to the incapacity to balance internal and external demands, leads to the installation of populist governments that aim to respond to popular demands with unsustainable state investment that leads to inflation and thus, again, to the deployment of more orthodox corrective economic measures. In 1985, Alan Garcia was elected President, and in contrast to his predecessor, who had responded mainly to external demands, chose to focus on internal pressures for better redistribution – committing only 10 percent of export value to debt repayment –, not only through social programmes, but also through import-substitution to promote national industrial growth. Garcia's project, which saw an initial boost in the economy, was soon to face strong limitations when the state's subsidiary policies led to hyperinflation.

The collapse of Garcia's economic model and the deep fiscal crisis, together with the rise of terrorist violence, led to the increasing paralysis of the state's functions and institutions. In terms of state development the 80's were thus a 'lost decade' in which neither the liberal nor the populist model managed to modernise and strengthen the state apparatus, but, on the contrary, saw an almost complete disappearance of state institutions, while at the same time the expression of social demands on the state was contained due to the presence of extreme political violence (i.e. terrorism). This is not to say that there was a social paralysis. Quite the opposite, the eighties gave rise to a series of social energies – seen for instance in the rise of an informal economy and of popular support organisations – through which citizens partly took over the state's responsibility to respond to social needs, and which have consolidated during the 90's following the installation of a Neo Liberal state.

The collapse of President Garcia's government not only led to deep economic crisis but also to a weakening of the party system, which gave way to the predominance of independent political leaders. Both council elections for Lima and presidential elections in 1990 evidenced this trend, as the traditional parties got only a small portion of votes, went to support independent leaders. In this context, the independent leader Alberto Fujimori was elected in 1990 in a second round of

elections in which he beat the coalition led by writer Mario Vargas Llosa. Fujimori, who won largely without having a coherent set of policy proposals during his campaign, soon pledged to the IMF's structural reform program to stabilise the unbalanced economy and which involved the flexibilisation and reduction of the state apparatus to give way to market led mechanisms –i.e. privatisations, flexibilisation of labour laws and other laws to promote investment, etc.

With hindsight it is possible to say that Fujimori's government was largely successful in achieving macroeconomic stability and growth. The government also managed to contain and deactivate terrorist violence. Having said this, however, it is also important to note that stability at the macroeconomic level has not entailed better redistributive policies, and as seen in the indicators mentioned in the first chapter, inequality and poverty are still the rule in the country. On the other hand, as has become clear after the return of democracy – especially through the work done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2003) – much of the containment of terrorist violence was achieved at the cost of breaching human rights.

The outcome of reforms, as well as of the previous decade of failed political and economic programmes, is that the 'State's intervention in the economy has diminished drastically. The functions and institutions that were in charge of regulating the labour, goods and services and capital markets have been deactivated.' (Lopez 1997:289). On the other hand, those institutions related to the sustainability of macroeconomic policies and market operation (i.e. the central bank, inland revenue, consumer protection, customs, etc.) have strengthened (Lopez 1997). The structural reforms have also meant that the state has relinquished much of its social role. Although Fujimori's government did increase social investment (as a consequence of fiscal growth and the return of Peru to the international funding community) and carried out reforms in social services, the latter were not part of an integral state approach to social change, but were rather seen as compensatory actions from a minimal Neo Liberal state⁴⁰.

In terms of state development what went on with the practical operation of the state is equally or even more important as the formal reforms carried during the 90's. Fujimori's electoral victory in 1990 did not grant him a representative majority, and after a series of reform attempts that failed due to lack of political support, he decided to close and reorganise Congress in 1992, in what has been described as an *auto-coup*. Fujimori broke with the two-camera parliamentary system and installed

⁴⁰ The implications of the neoliberal state for education and particularly for the discontinuity of policies will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

a single camera one, for which elections were called. The weakened party system, together with Fujimori's initial popularity and populist approach, led representatives from his independent movement to gain a sweeping majority. After this, the legislative became, in reality, a branch of the executive, passing laws that allowed the government to do whatever it wanted – even unconstitutional laws like that which in 2000 allowed Fujimori to run for a third electoral period⁴¹.

The division of powers which is supposed to establish necessary limits on state action was also curtailed in other areas. As has become clear after the dismissal of Fujimori, the government also controlled the judiciary, mainly by corrupt means. The same is true of other areas such as the media, where leaked videos have shown how the government bribed owners of important media, as well as created its own series of tabloids as part of a strategy to control and influence public opinion. All these moves were part of a strategy, largely planned by the government's head of intelligence (Vladimiro Montesinos), to control power for another decade. Needless to say, the outcome of Fujimori's rule has been yet deeper weakening of the legitimacy of the state.

The corruption scandal that finally led to the collapse of Fujimori's government led to the installation of a transition government and later call for elections. The disbelief in state and political institutions that the evidence of corruption generated gave way to a renewed emphasis on the need to democratise political power and strengthen state institutions. This was the focus of Alejandro Toledo's electoral campaign which led him to become president in 2001. Transparency and civil society participation in the public sphere to counterbalance and limit the use and abuse of state power have also become leitmotifs permeating all areas of policy making⁴².

The extent to which the new government has strengthened state institutions is relative. Although the heightened awareness about the need to stop corruption has put some limits on state action – at least now there are more institutions willing to denounce corrupt activities -, the extent to which politics and policy making have been democratised is questionable. As this study attempts to show, at least in the case of education (and this seems to be the same in most policy areas), decision making still takes place in a highly authoritative manner, whereby policy makers have almost absolute power to change policies according to their personal will, thus breeding untenable degrees of discontinuity that lead to the failure of policies and

⁴¹ The Peruvian constitution only allows presidents to govern for two consecutive periods.

⁴² The New Education Law approved in 2003, for instance, is based on a highly participative decision making structure.

reforms. Beyond minimal democratic conditions, then, the country still appears to operate according to an authoritative logic, which suggests the need to focus political and social action not only on the strengthening of institutions, but also on the modification of policy making cultures, which are the heirs of a form of state in which political leaders have had absolute decision making powers. As Lopez (1997) suggests:

‘... patrimonialism (...) permeates all the institutional body of the state, from the top to the bottom. By virtue of this prevalence, those people who occupy various public functions, from the higher to the lower ones, do not consider or think of themselves as real state officers, serving the general interests of citizens, but rather as owners of those functions or delegates of the supreme patron who occupies the apex of power: the president of the Republic.’ (p. 248)

The quote is particularly relevant in the context of this study, which aims to analyse the problems that such a form of state organisation can bring for specific areas as education. It opens up two central lines of analysis that will be explored in the following chapters, and which link discontinuity not only to the institutional weaknesses of the state, but also to the particular cultures of policy making that such state and society relations have given rise to.

Similar paths to state development and modernisation have been followed in much of the Latin American region. Much of the modernisation process in the region has responded to exogenous rather than endogenous factors, meaning that the development of modern institutions has not been a consequence, or has not taken place together with social changes, but has rather taken place through the imitation of patterns of development taking place elsewhere, without the accompanying social changes (Touraine 1998). A similar view is developed by Kobrin (1977), who talks about a process of ‘inverted’ modernisation in the region, through which ‘modern industrial institutions... [have been] uprooted and superimposed upon relatively traditional societies’, and ‘social and cultural change is often a function of this transplantation’ (Kobrin 1977), rather than the consequence of an endogenous movement within society.

The links between social change and the development of political systems have been the focus of much theoretical development (cfr. Moore 1966). In the case of

Peru, the result of developments based on such exogenous or inverted process of modernisation has often been characterised with terms like 'hybridity', which denote the social, cultural and political heterogeneity that stems from the syncretism of old and new forms of organisation (cfr. De Toro 2002). This has even led some to describe Latin America as 'postmodern *avant-la-lettre*', not because of the presence of a specific conceptual strategy like that which is associated with postmodern thought, as De Toro duly clarifies, but because of the heterogeneous identity of its peoples and modes of organisation, which escape essentialist or unambiguous representations.

The problems and limitations brought about by having followed such routes to modernisation have been extensively explored, especially with a focus on cultural and political developments. The latter focus, which is particularly relevant for this study, has underscored the problems that having semi-modern states together with very unequal societies raise for the possibility of establishing fully democratic political regimes. The work of Guillermo O'Donnell has been particularly influential in this area, as he questions the degree to which democracy has been embedded in the region (1994; 1998; 1999). His studies suggest that beyond some necessary but minimal definitions of democracy (fair elections, free press, etc.) the operation of democratic principles is seriously curtailed by the inoperativeness of the 'rule of law' in the Latin American region. This, as he puts it, goes hand in hand with the prevalence of fundamental social inequalities, and is reflected in the way in which citizens are differently treated by the law on the basis of their social positions. For him this is, by and large, the consequence of having developed political rights without 'the expansion and densification of civil rights' (O'Donnell 1998), which has hindered the more or less homogeneous spread of the effects of modernity in society. As O'Donnell (2001) suggests, then, it is important to analyse the possibilities and limitations of democracy in the region not only in terms of political regimes, but also in terms of the characteristics of the state – especially, in his view, in terms of the operation of the legal system, which tends to underscore social differences.

A similar reading, although with a different focus, could be made of how the specific paths to modernisation have limited states' capacity to promote and deliver policies. One direction from which to explore this has to do with the consequences of the exogenous modernisation process. According to Touraine (1998), this has led to a 'partial fusion of the state, political society and social actors' – which contrasts with the separation of powers that characterises modern states –, and where 'the spread

of clientelism and corruption can weaken both the actors and the state' (p.179), as well as the possibility of establishing democratic forms of government. This evidently limits the states' organisational and policy making capacities, as public and private interests become mixed criteria for state action. Just as O'Donnell showed in relation to the legal system, the system of policy making also seems to be permeated by undemocratic forms of decision-making that tend to curtail legitimacy and limit the effectiveness of state action.

A different reading, which is particularly relevant for the case of education, takes the prevalence – and maintenance - of basic social inequalities as an indication of why the state has not developed a more adequate process machinery to deliver education policies. This aspect of the problem relates the discontinuity of policies to structural issues, which have to do with the extent to which the state is able to take on a social development role by promoting policies that might effectively reduce inequalities. Both lines of analysis will be further explored in the next section on the basis of the empirical data gathered for the study.

CHAPTER 8 - EDUCATION AND THE STATE

The historical account offered above opens up a series of questions, especially in relation to Peru's position *vis a vis* modern state developments and the kind of problems this brings about for the possibility of carrying out policies, especially in social areas such as education. Reflecting on the problems of the Peruvian state, Quijano (2000) suggests that the core of difficulties lies in the paradoxical situation of having 'an independent state and a colonial society' (p.234). Quijano (1993; 2000) extends the idea of coloniality beyond its usual definition to include a mode of organisation that is based on exclusion and domination by a few powerful elites – and which matches what has been shown in the above pages, particularly the structure of the oligarchic state. For Quijano, the mode of socio-political organisation that has prevailed throughout the country's Republican history is based on what he describes as 'the coloniality of power', a form of power based on exclusion mainly on the basis of racial difference. As has been shown above, 'the independence process of Latin American states without the decolonisation of society could not be, and was not, a process towards the development of modern nation-states, but a rearticulation of the coloniality of power over new institutional grounds' (Quijano 2000:236).

This can be seen as the central contradiction at the core of the Peruvian state, which, as the title of Lopez's (1997) book suggests, has 'real and imaginary citizens' (i.e. in terms of their civil rights). It leads to a situation that contradicts the fundamental elements of the nation-state, which is based on a sense of cohesion and equality of citizens *vis a vis* the state and the law. Although the social structure of the country is changing and has acquired more flexibility in recent decades, especially after the military government of General Velasco, much of this critique of the characteristics and relations of the Peruvian state and society is still valid (see Benavides 2002). And as was briefly mentioned above, this opens up problems especially when it comes to the actions of the state in relation to social areas, which would demand the operation of more inclusive citizenship categories⁴³.

Generalising on the tendencies of similar states, Mouzelis (2000) refers to 'the dissonance in semi-peripheral countries between politico-administrative institutions imported from the West, and the underlying power relations between indigenous [and non-indigenous] interest groups' (p.746). This dissonance creates substantial

⁴³ O'Donnell (1998) has explored similar ideas, focusing especially on the '(un)rule of law' in Latin America, and how it helps reproduce social differences.

problems for the operation of institutions, as there is a 'discrepancy between the normative-virtual and the actual' which is 'much greater than in those Western democracies' from which political institutions were imported (Mouzelis 2000:747).

8.1 READING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE AND EDUCATION

Although the literature which links educational development to state characteristics is increasing, the latter is rather restricted to developments in fully capitalist nations (Archer 1984; Bowles *et al.* 1976; Dale 1989; Green 1990), from which, as should have become clear from the account provided above, as well as from previous chapters, the Peruvian state stands at a certain distance – particularly in terms of the 'discrepancy' between the normative (institutional) level and the actual level of everyday action. And although the concern in this study is not with educational processes *per se*, and how they can be linked to specific state developments, the issue of discontinuity seems to be in direct relation to the institutional weakness of the Peruvian state, as well as to the role that public education has played in its development.

Green (1990), for instance, offers a comprehensive review of attempts to link educational developments to different paths to state formation. The analysis offered above follows the same lines of his critique, which questions liberal/functionalist, Marxist and Weberian approaches to then advance a more state-centred and comparative position. Green's most fundamental criticism tackles the reductionism of these approaches, as well as their lack of comparative perspective when theorising the state, which often leads to deterministic explanations that are untenable in view of the variety of education-state developments, which can only be explained through a more detailed and comparative account of variations in state formation.

Green's critique first focuses on functionalist explanations, which have attempted to establish a direct link between the rise of education systems – and their function thereafter – and skill formation, especially after the onset of the industrial revolution. Green traces the origins of this line of analysis to the work of structural functionalism, and particularly to the work of Durkheim, for whom mass education arose to satisfy the needs for skilled labour and a homogeneous, governable society, brought about by the industrial revolution. Education, then, had not only to impart specialised knowledge for the acquisition of fundamental skills, but more importantly perhaps, it had to 'integrate children into collective ideas – a *culture générale*' (Green 1990:37). Durkheim's ideas contrasted with the more individualist understanding of the role of

education which had been advanced by liberal theorists, who saw education as a liberating and democratising force. This line of thought is the basis for more contemporary functionalist approaches to the analysis of education, such as human capital theory (see Halsey *et al.* 1977).

In contrast with the functionalist position, Green (1990) finds that educational developments have not necessarily coincided with industrial ones, especially in England, where the massification of public education came at a rather late stage of industrialisation. The author shows how other accounts, such as those built on a Marxist perspective, are better at capturing the intricacies of the relations between education, the economy and labour, as they focus on 'how education reproduces and legitimates the power relations of the labour market through selection and differential socialization based on the class, ethnic and gender divisions of society at large' (Green 1990:39). At the core of this tradition lie works like those of Bowles and Gintis (1976), who show how education legitimises social inequalities by fostering and reinforcing the belief in meritocracy. And although Green is not far from the latter approach, he criticises some of its exponents for offering a rather reductionist view of the relations between education and the economy. Green's work is more in the lines of neo-Marxist thinkers (see Dale 1989; see Offe 1996), who link the role of education to the legitimacy functions of the state and to the maintenance of a dominant hegemony, rather than establishing a direct relation between education and the reproduction of social relations.

Green's approach takes on Archer's (1984) criticisms. She offers a theorisation of the social origins of education systems from a Weberian perspective, which leads her to suggest that rather than the product of social dynamics, 'education is fundamentally about what people have wanted of it and have been able to do to it' (Archer 1984:1). A more contingent view than the one offered from a structuralist perspective. Archer not only dismisses the functionalist perspective for reasons similar to those given by Green, but she also criticises the Marxist account of the role of education, which according to her 'also exhibits an unacceptable economic determinism, denying the efficacy of ideas in educational change and operating a crude bi-polar concept of class' (in Green 1990:68). In contrast to this, Archer replaces determinism with 'a theory which posits the centrality of group interaction, where this is conditioned or influenced, but not determined, by prior structural or social factors.' (Green 1990:69).

According to Green, although Archer's account is a step forward in relation to the more deterministic accounts of education and state developments, it lacks a

systematic theorisation of the state. In contrast to this, and again, more in the line of the state-centred theories discussed in the previous section, Green's analysis is 'premised on the notion that the development of public education systems can only be understood in relation to the process of state formation, where this is understood in a non-reductive way which gives due weight to both political forms and their economic and social conditions of existence. State formation refers to the process by which the modern state has been constructed.' (p.77). Consistent with Marxist thinkers, Green advances a perspective grounded on Gramsci's theory of hegemony, which links educational developments to the sustenance of specific socio-political relations through the spread of values and forms of conduct. In particular, he relates the emergence and consolidation of education systems with the rise and consolidation of nation-states, and the ensuing needs to normalise citizens into required values. Education thus plays an important role

'not only in furnishing industry and the state bureaucracy with the right skills and appropriate attitudes but also it is of inestimable value for the dominant social classes in establishing their hegemony over the population at large' (Green 1990:80)

8.1.1 The legitimising role of education

This view of education as contributing to the establishment of a hegemony as a way of legitimising prevalent social structures is also explored by Dale (1989) from a similar neo-Marxist perspective⁴⁴. Dale explores the function of education in relation to that of the state in advanced capitalist nations following a line of argument initiated by Marxist thinkers such as Gramsci and Althusser in relation to the role of ideological state apparatuses (like education) in the legitimisation of capitalist states. Dale's perspective is also highly influenced by Offe's ideas about the role of the state in capitalist nations, which is seen in terms of the creation of conditions for continuous capital accumulation, and offers a more subtle conceptualisation of the way in which the state gains legitimacy and maintains social organisation.

Contrary to original Marxist ideas in which the state was seen as directly influenced by the pressures of capitalist interests, in Offe's (1996) view, as discussed above, the role of the state in the preservation of capitalism has to appear neutral and

⁴⁴ Others like Bourdieu and Bernstein (see Halsey *et al.* 1997) have explored similar ideas but focusing more on the way in which cultural values ('cultural capital') shape educational opportunity. I will not discuss their positions in detail as they do not focus specifically on the relations between education and the state, which is the core of the present analysis.

autonomous, since only from this position it can act as a mediator in the conflicts between individual capitals and between the latter and the working classes. Such neutrality is limited by the fact that the primary aim of state action is to preserve the accumulation process on which its survival depends. The modern state is – or should be – autonomous from particular interests but not from capitalism as such. The problem faced by the state in the pursuit of this aim is one of legitimacy, which it cannot gain with an overt preference for the accumulation of capital, given that the latter is associated with the creation of fundamental inequalities. The state therefore needs to perform legitimising functions that include the redistribution of capital gains to the population.

Legitimation is attained also through less overt means, which include the spread of values that help maintain the social organisation required for capital accumulation, for instance, through the education system⁴⁵. How this is achieved is differently conceptualised by various authors. Views range from those that see the relation between education and the legitimisation of capitalism as being more or less direct, to those, such as Dale himself, who see this relation as being more indirect. The hegemony of the capitalist mode of production to which the education system contributes is, in Dale's view, 'not so much about winning approval for the status quo, winning consent for it or even acceptance of it', but rather about 'the prevention of rejection, opposition or alternatives to the status quo through denying the use of the school for such purposes' (Dale 1989:43).

However indirect or covert this legitimising function might be, there are other dimensions in which the relation between education and capitalism, or between education and the economy – a relation that is mediated by the state (i.e. in its legislative capacities) – is quite direct and needs be less covert. Such is the case of the relation between education and labour. Demands for different labour skills have direct implications for the education system, which is seen as geared to provide the kind of labour that employers require. As Dale shows, the functions of education change as the mode of production changes, both to provide the required labour and to form – 'discipline' to use Foucault's (1991) term - the kind of citizens that the state requires in each new phase of economic development. Education in this view has a clearly identifiable function, as does the role of the state in providing education.

⁴⁵ A view not so deeply explored by Offe but which can be found in Poulantzas (see Carnoy 1984).

8.1.2 Governmentality and Education

The idea of 'disciplined' subjects shifts the focus of analysis to the underlying rationale of different state formations and the educational practices that they lead to. This is the line of analysis undertaken in recent approaches to education policy, such as the one offered by Olssen, Codd and O'Neil (2004), which is based on a Foucauldian reading of policy and looks at the kind of governmentality that different state forms – particularly the Neo Liberal state – entail. Although the Foucauldian perspective is partly developed as a critique of the economic determinism of Marxist approaches, it is not entirely contradictory with the latter, especially as seen in neo-Marxist and Gramscian developments and their emphasis on legitimation and hegemony. These views are much more compatible with Foucault's view of power as being 'exercised rather than possessed' (Olssen *et al.* 2004:23) than the more materialist versions of Marxism which see power in terms of domination and exploitation according to positions in the dominant mode of production. In Foucault's case, what predominates is an analysis of the 'control' of the individual, rather than an analysis of class processes.

The analysis offered by Olssen *et al.* (2004) links the prevalence of a specific form of socio-political organisation – the Neo Liberal state - to the establishment of a concomitant discourse that permeates and gives rise to a new, dominant, common sense. This, they argue, is reflected in new educational orthodoxies (i.e. the impact of globalisation and the educational reforms it 'demands'), which can be analysed 'in relation to the political philosophy of neoliberalism' (p.13). In this view, the role of education is linked to the creation of hegemony through the promotion of a certain kind of governmentality, which helps legitimise the Neo Liberal form of state and society organisation. Citizens are thus disciplined into a series of values that will help them fulfil their role in this prevalent mode of organisation, and the state (through education policies, among other things), has to 'see to it that each one of us makes a continuous 'enterprise of ourselves'' (p.137).

The Neo Liberal state, suggest Olssen *et al.* entails a fundamental change in the techniques of government, but not in the aim of exerting control over citizens for the achievement of a specific mode of social organisation. The main shift is from a state that actively exerts control, to one that partly yields that responsibility to citizens themselves, who, through the acquisition of a specific set of values, develop a 'governmentality' that allows them to take over 'responsible self-management' as well as entrepreneurial attitudes. At the same time, the state becomes a surveillant of the citizens' self-governance, rather than a more overt enforcer of it. The move

towards a minimal or reduced state is therefore 'a reduction of 'bureaucracy' but not 'control', as 'the role of the state is now seen as that of the 'mediator' and 'instigator' of the successful operation of the market' (Olssen *et al.* 2004:138). This, as the authors suggest, takes place through the imposition of 'policies of neoliberal governmentality' (Olssen *et al.* 2004:13), which tend to be justified through a discourse on globalisation and its effects on the organisation of everyday life.

Education, in this context, appears to play an even more fundamental role than it did in the past, as it is one of the central means to inculcate the values of entrepreneurialism and self-governance that the new mode of socio-political organisation requires. This might account for the current 'epidemic of education policies' (Levin 1998), that increases awareness about the need to change and improve education and leads to the definition of common solutions to policy problems as a response to perceived global changes. At the same time, however, the increasing emphasis on choice and individual success seems to leave out questions of equity and social cohesion, as those who are already in advantaged positions appear to be able to make better choices and use of educational opportunities (Halsey *et al.* 1997). This suggests that 'there is an urgent need to balance consumer rights with a new conception of citizen rights to give voice to those excluded from the benefits of both social democratic and neoliberal policies' (Whitty 2002: 20).

Although the present study is not specifically concerned with the content of policy developments in Peru, but rather with the process of policy making, the line of analysis followed up to now underscores some of the fundamental elements that should be considered when analysing the relations between education and the state. And the latter is, I think, a fundamental point for understanding the problem of policy discontinuity. As will be discussed in the following pages, discontinuity, or the impossibility of consolidating policy proposals, can be read as an expression of the ambiguous role that education has played in Peru's state development – an ambiguity that stems from the central contradictions that have remained at the core of the Peruvian state throughout its attempts at modernisation. As will be further expanded in the following section, this ambiguity takes on a particularly complex character in the present stage of Neo Liberal state developments, given the difficulties to promote a desired form of governmentality without having previously achieved certain social conditions of equality of opportunity.

The new agenda of education policy – inspired in the political philosophy of neoliberalism - raises special challenges in a case like Peru, as the state needs to *define* rather than *redefine* its role *vis a vis* the education system. Although as many scholars in the region contend (Narodowski and Nores 2003), the spread of Neo Liberal policies has been quite restricted, especially as full choice mechanisms have not been implemented, it is undeniable that states across the region, as elsewhere, have also caught the effects of the new epidemic, not only of education policies, but also of the adaptation of the state in relation to the forces of globalisation⁴⁶ - as seen for instance in the application of structural adjustment programmes (Gonzales de Olarte 1994). And the need to redefine the role of the state *vis a vis* the effects of the new orthodoxy of globalisation – Whitty's (2002) admonition that we balance consumer rights with a new conception of citizen rights (see quote above) - seems especially fit for contexts of high social inequality, such as Latin America.

It is with these notions in mind that we can now go on to consider in more detail the problems that state and education relations face in the case of Peru - of which discontinuity is a major symptom.

8.2 THE STATE AND EDUCATION IN PERU

8.2.3 Education through the lens of state contradictions

To understand the problems faced in Peruvian policy making it is possible to extend Dale's (1989) idea that education systems describe similar contradictions to those of the states in which they are embedded. In the case of capitalist states, Dale argues that problems stem from the contradictory demands that the state has to satisfy, having to promote equitable policies to maintain legitimacy, while at the same time having to support the fundamentally inequitable process of capital accumulation on which its own existence depends.

In the Peruvian case, we have seen that the lack of integration of state and social developments also generates a fundamental ambiguity at the core of the state, but

⁴⁶ Here Olssen, Codd *et al.*'s (2004) distinction between the 'political philosophy' of neoliberalism, and its specific manifestations is particularly relevant. The critique that authors such as Narodowski and Nores (2003) make of the extent to which educational policies of neoliberal character can be found in the Latin America region is based on an attempt to identify specific manifestations of market oriented policies. But what Olssen, Codd *et al.* suggest is that what we need to look for is, rather than these specific forms, a broader and more pervasive political philosophy that relates to the conception of the role of the state, and which can be present even if the state does not fully relinquish its responsibilities to the market. It is more a matter of the lack of a political economy, than a matter of whether specific policies conform to certain 'neoliberal' standards.

one that is not entirely the same as the one pointed by Dale. The contradiction is rather one of a state that for much of its history has not seriously taken on the need for legitimacy, and has yielded to the demands of private interests. This has seriously curtailed the possibility of using the education system to support the development of hegemony, as state power is supported by more overtly oppressive and exclusionary means. The role of education in this sense is rather unclear, as it attempts to spread values of equality of opportunity that are contradicted by the lack of opportunities for advancement faced by citizens in their everyday life. This view was supported by one of the research interviewees, according to whom:

The problem here [in Peru] is that there's no state policy because a hegemony has not been developed, that is, a [representative] elite hasn't been built, nor has a core that says 'this is the way to go'. I mean, State policies are not an abstract matter. In order to create or make something a State policy you have to have convinced people that that is a State policy, if not, nothing happens... and this has not happened. (Former ministerial adviser).

The interviewee's comment is particularly relevant for the issue of discontinuity, which suggests that problems in the relation between the state and society in Peru are of a very different nature to those experienced in more developed capitalist nations. Whereas in the latter the problem is one of maintaining hegemony while supporting an economic system that contradicts some of the values that make part of that hegemony, in the Peruvian case, the problem is one of not having a hegemony capable of guiding education policies in desired directions. The term 'hegemony' here appears to have more positive connotations than usual, and refers to the articulation of interests into a more or less shared discourse.

The problem pointed to by the interviewee relates to the particular historical paths to state development that the country has followed, and to the internal contradictions that have prevailed all throughout – i.e. the formal attempts to modernise the state while maintaining a rather traditional structure of social relations and exclusion, and the existence of elites that have not taken on the aim of becoming more widely representative.

Similar differences appear if we take on the view that the role of education is partly to provide a skilled labour force to support economic development. In this case the lack of clarity in terms of the role of education, especially of public education becomes

stronger. In an economy that still thrives on primary exports as the major source of revenue, and which bases part of its capacity to compete internationally on the availability of a cheap workforce, there are little incentives to improve the quality of education. This idea is also illustrated by the interviewee quoted above:

When I tell you about how our children aren't in public schools, I'm saying something about to that. I mean, OUR country can move without public schools. Public schools can remain as they are and nothing will happen.

(...)

But that's terrible, it's terrible, I'm absolutely against that, I think it's terrible, I think it's an extreme [form of] discrimination, it's almost a caste policy, but that happens... that happens! So, you can say... look at the passion with which the issue of fiscal deficit is discussed...' But educational issues.. let's say, 'we've gone down in this, or have gone up in that'. No. Because I think that there's a circuit in this country in which you can do fairly well [as a country], and you can have a big bulk of cheap labour... (Former Ministerial adviser)

The interviewee's pessimistic, but probably realistic view – especially when considering indicators about the persistent low quality of public education, or the difficulties to raise the national budget assigned to education – provides a source of structural explanations for the discontinuity of education policies. In a context in which the improvement of public education does not really need to be taken seriously, because the country (i.e. the economy) can go on without them, the development of a coherent set of education policies seems unnecessary. Of course, I am not arguing that it is. But I think it is important to consider this view if we want to reach substantial explanations that might go beyond the usual political discourses. Policy discontinuity appears to evidence a rather different trend, which suggests that education is not really as important for the country's development as it is purported to be.

This view acquires particularly strong connotations in the current stage of Neo Liberal state developments. As has been shown in recent years, the application of Neo Liberal policies of reducing the state and emphasising the importance of consumer rights have already deepened existing inequalities in the Latin American region (Veltmeyer *et al.* 1997), as the tendency undermines the state's capacity to take on a more active role in balancing negative social and economic trends. The

problem of discontinuity, which strongly contributes to the maintenance and deepening of educational inequalities – and therefore to the reproduction of social and economic ones -, seems to require changes at the level of political economy, and not only at the level of specific policies. This, however, contradicts the fundamental ‘political philosophy’ of neoliberalism (Olssen *et al.* 2004) that seems to predominate in public policy. It is here that claims about the need to bring the state back in (Evans *et al.* 1985) acquire particularly important connotations. But rather than discussions focusing on the seemingly excluding options of state planning versus *laissez-faire* policies, ‘the salient debate should be about the nature, purpose and consequences of the *form* of the state action’, and not ‘about questions of magnitude of intervention’ (O’Neill 2004: 257).

8.2.4 The operation of the institutional apparatus for education policy making

The above considerations about the role of education in Peruvian state development offer a macro level framework for approaching the problem of discontinuity and the data analysis in the following section. At a more specific level, the analysis will also focus on issues concerning the policy making apparatus in education, and its relation to the characteristics of the Peruvian state. State institutions are the pool of constraints and resources which shape and open possibilities for policy making, and the issue of discontinuity is especially related to problems in the realm of institutions. The theoretical and analytical focus is set here on state strength, understood in terms of the state’s capacity to organize the population and pursue desired goals.

As will be seen in the next section, interviewees often point to the institutional frailty of the Peruvian state as a major hindrance for policy making and as one of the major causes of policy discontinuity. Such institutional frailty and the need to strengthen institutions is at the centre of most discussions concerning the development possibilities of the Latin American region (see Inter-American Development Bank 2004; Pinzón 2003).

The notion of institutions is used here in the broad sense defined by North (1990), for whom they are ‘the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, ... the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction...’ (p.3). According to this, the aim of institutions is to ‘reduce uncertainty by providing a structure to everyday life’ (p.3)⁴⁷. North (1990) distinguishes institutions from organisations: the latter have

⁴⁷ In case the definition of institutions as ‘rules of the game’ gives rise to questions about the possible structural determination of institutions, it might be necessary to emphasise that North’s (1990) definition

more specific aims, and consist of 'groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives (p.5). Institutions define what organisations exist and how they evolve, but at the same time organisations are 'agents of institutional change' (North 1990:5).

In this broad sense the existence of institutions is not specifically related to any particular historical development, as 'rules of the game' have existed at all times. Here, however, and especially when the issue of 'institutional weakness' is concerned, the notion of institutions is linked to modern state developments. In relation to this, Giddens (1990) suggests that modern states should be 'interpreted in terms of the coordinated control over delimited territorial arenas' (p.57). As in North's definition, Giddens also relates the role of modern institutions to the reduction of uncertainty, and therefore links them to the notion of trust. The operation of modern institutions, which aims to reduce uncertainty, entails, when working properly, citizens' trust as well as their willingness to act 'according the rules'. There is a double dynamic here, as institutions depend on individuals and their willingness to act in certain ways, while at the same time individuals rely on the certainty provided by institutional arrangements.

These definitions provide a basic ground for understanding what is meant by the weakness of Peruvian institutions and how this contributes to the problem of education policy discontinuity. Before going into some more substantive issues, however, it might be convenient to consider Mouzelis' (2000) distinction between the paradigmatic (normative) and syntagmatic (actual) dimensions of social action, as it provides a useful framework for understanding where the sources of institutional weakness might lie. Institutions define a 'virtual [paradigmatic] level' of social relations and help define roles that are translated (i.e. both instantiated and *modified*) into 'actual relationships between actors unfolding syntagmatically in time and space' (p.744)⁴⁸. The trust that individuals put in institutions and their willingness to act according to existing rules – both of which are conditions of possibility for the existence of institutions – presuppose a kind of continuity between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic level, that is between norms (or rules) and individuals' actions.

The institutional weakness which is often mentioned when trying to explain the inability of the Peruvian state to steer social development in desired directions, can

considers rules both as constraining and enabling. This implies that within some more or less defined boundaries, there are infinite possibilities for change – even change leading to the modification of the institutional framework.

⁴⁸ Mouzelis (2000) links this the *langue-parole* distinction, where the *langue* constitutes the paradigmatic (virtual) level of linguistic rules, while the *parole* is the instantiation of those rules in the here and now, and in a way that is profoundly creative.

then be read as the existence of a strong 'distance or discrepancy' (Mouzelis 2000:747) between the normative level of how things *should be done* and the way in which things are *actually done*⁴⁹. The weakness does not mean that institutions do not exist, as there are always some rules according to which social interaction takes place - and as Mouzelis (2000) suggests, even in spite of the existence of such discrepancies institutions still can shape social interaction in positive ways. The problem is rather one of lack of coordination between the norm and individuals' actions, which leads to a stronger degree of uncertainty, and – as the other side of the coin – a generalised mistrust in institutions.

Institutional weakness can be linked to the historical development of the state in Peru and the Latin American region, and what Touraine (1998) described as the process of 'exogenous modernisation' that led to the importation of modern institutions without necessary social changes. This has led to the existence of a fundamental distance between the normative and the actual levels of social interaction that has been reinforced by ongoing political and social developments.

Looking at the current situation of Latin America, O'Donnell (1998) links the institutional weakness of most countries in the region, to the inoperativeness of 'the rule of law'. This leads to widespread corruption and undermines the possibilities of democratic governance. In a different analysis, Ostiguy (2001) links institutional weakness to the prevalence of populist forms of political representation in Latin American countries, which by definition, have an 'anti-institutional nature', as 'populist leaders tend in general to be oblivious of formal institutional rules and procedures' (p.26). The trend, then, which sets the distance between the normative and actual levels of social action, is to overlook formal institutional arrangements⁵⁰.

More specifically relevant for this study, the problem of discontinuity appears to be directly linked to institutional weakness. As will be seen in the data analysis section, policy makers operate in a context of feeble rules which enables them to act in ways that might be negative for the consecution of desired aims – in terms of education policies in this case -, but which also limits their possibilities for carrying out policies with long-lasting effects.

The data analysis illustrates both these issues, as it combines a focus on institutional elements with a more specific analysis of policy making cultures as seen in the

⁴⁹ It is relevant to note that Mouzelis (2000) refers to the case of Latin America when using the idea of 'distance or discrepancy' between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic levels.

⁵⁰ In some cases this can lead to extreme corruption, as in the case of Fujimori's government in Peru, in which not only there existed virtually no separation between the legislative and the executive, but where corruption permeated to the most intricate levels of public action.

various interview narratives. Before going into this, however, the next chapter presents a more detailed account of perspectives on policy analysis, which has been another main guiding thread in the research.

CHAPTER 9 - POLICY MAKING AND ANALYSIS

The problem of policy discontinuity, as was shown in the opening pages, sets the focus of analysis on the process of policy making, rather than on the content of specific policies. It is here that an understanding of what is at stake in various existing approaches to policy making and analysis becomes pressing.

The vast literature on this topic is often daunting as one is presented with an extensive array of approaches to policy making that bear different names in each discussion. Accounts are often overly descriptive, each offering a particular definition of policy making which leads to a focus on specific aspects such as the stages of policy making, the prevalence of networks, problems of implementation, the prevalence of ideas or the rational behaviour of policy actors. Some authors have suggested that this rather fragmented array of approaches requires an effort to integrate perspectives as to achieve a more complete view of what is at stake in policy making (see John 1998).

Despite this variety, it is possible to identify some main trends within approaches to policy analysis. A central trend in policy analysis emphasises the technical aspects of policy making and seeks to overcome the influence of politics. Criticisms of such a technical approach highlight the need to analyse policy making as inextricably linked to political processes, and thus to values and normative considerations. A more recent trend draws from the post-empiricist turn in the social sciences and takes on developments from critical and post-structuralist theories to emphasise policy as deliberation and the need to deconstruct the way in which policy problems are represented. There are considerable differences between specific approaches in each of these groups, but also some basic epistemological assumptions that guide proposals within each of them and which justify the threefold typology.

The origins and development of the discipline of policy analysis sheds some light as to the variations in perspectives. Fischer (2003) points out how policy analysis was initially associated with 'managerial practices' of government, and had therefore an overly technocratic outlook. The aim of policy analysis in this model was to 'translate political and social issues into technically defined ends to be pursued through administrative means' (p.4). This led to the prevalence of rational actor accounts that aimed to show the kinds of constraints and incentives that policy makers had when making decisions. This perspective does not consider the way in which problems are shaped by values and interpretations, and focuses mainly on the technical means to

solve them, thus indicating the prevalence of a neopositivist/empiricist perspective that determines methods of analysis. This generally leads to a certain contempt for democratic practices in policy making, as policy is seen as a realm for experts rather than citizens. Moreover, although the perspective has been subjected to strong critiques, it still dominates the policy landscape today.

Critics of the technical-rational approach point towards the value-ladenness of policy making and the inseparability of policy from politics, as well as to the complexity of policy making processes, which do not match technical-rationalist accounts. Many authors then attempt to offer better accounts of the complexity of policy making by considering how political, organisational and other factors influence policy making. In some cases this has led to a shift in the focus of analysis from 'the best way to solve a problem' to 'how to improve the politics of problem definition' (see Bacchi 1999).

Developments in the field of policy analysis have more recently incorporated post-empiricist critiques and highlight the need to question the way in which problems are represented, rather than focusing on ways of solving them. The previous positions are criticised precisely for not problematising the way in which problems are framed, which leads to a lack of critical perspective about the kind of power relations that problem setting indicates or helps reproduce. The aim of analysis in this perspective would be to show the kinds of power dynamics that lie behind the representation of problems in particular ways. Some developments in this trend are influenced by post-structural critiques, especially Foucault's analysis of discourse as power, while others are more in line with Habermas' critical theory and attempts to link policy to normative aims.

In what follows I will focus on each of these trends in more detail, as to define my own analytical standpoint for the analysis of policy making. It will become clear that my position is close to some post-empiricist developments, especially those that have managed to maintain some more pragmatic commitments in relation to the need to improve policy making practices. In this, however, I stand in a middle ground between the normativist focus on communication and consensus and the more agonistic models⁵¹, usually associated with post-modern critiques, which emphasise permanent contestation of problem representations. Here I take on Barnett's (2003) emphasis on democracy as 'a system of rule, requiring binding decisions' (p.27), a

⁵¹ The term 'agonistic' here alludes to a commitment to permanent contestation or denunciation proper of some versions of democracy that have been developed as part of the cultural or post-modern turn in the social sciences. Agonism is seen as the only possible political form in view of critiques of foundationalism and representation which impose new forms of power relations. It is a way of avoiding the imposition of new representations. In contrast to this, I follow Barnett's (2003) proposals, that we might need to redeem, rather than overcome, representation.

point that is especially relevant for the analysis of discontinuity, as the latter indicates precisely the lack of binding decisions in the education policy arena.

9.1 POLICY AS TECHNIQUE

The basic assumption within this perspective of 'policy as technique' is that policy is about the resolution of objectively identifiable problems. Starting from this, the policy process has usually been portrayed as a series of more or less discrete stages that go from analysis to evaluation, passing through the establishment and implementation of solutions. This perspective is commonly associated with rational actor models which attempt to understand the constraints and demands that policy makers face at each stage of decision making and which lead to the establishment of particular solutions to attain desired aims. It is the specific objective of solving an existing problem that guides policy makers at each step. The focus of analysis is the decision making process, rather than the framing of problems in specific ways, and the aim is 'outlining the reasons for which a decision was taken' (McGrew *et al.* 1982:8)⁵².

This initial technical-rationalist approach⁵³ has suffered considerable modifications and many of its newer versions seem to have incorporated some of the ongoing critiques to which it has been subjected. However, the basic assumption about the possibility for objective determination of problems has remained unchallenged. Changes are more to do with accounting in a more complex manner for the sorts of influences that affect decision making, and have in some cases led to the reformulation of the original view that policy making consists of a series of discrete stages.

McGrew and Wilson's (1982) typology of policy making models is an example of the 'variations within the same theme' that characterise this perspective. Apart from the rational actor model, which assumes that policy is the outcome of the rational calculation of the possible outcomes of a decision as to guarantee maximum benefits, they identify an organisational processes model and a political bargaining one. The first takes the rational actor model one step further by showing the kinds of organisational constraints that frame rational actors' decisions. The model therefore

⁵² Much of the policy literature that falls under this category is therefore about 'mapping' the policy process, as to have a clear picture of how policymakers make decisions and solve problems that could then guide prescriptions of better ways to do things.

⁵³ This is the term use by Lindblom (in Bacchi 1999:25). Bacchi prefers to call them 'comprehensive rationalists'.

discusses the different and often contradictory aims of different units within an organisation, and shows how such differences can mean that 'the final decision taken at the summit of the organization may negate, directly or indirectly, the objectives of the initial problem-to-be-solved' (McGrew and Wilson 1982:9).

The political bargaining model does something similar, but focuses on the political rather than the organisational constraints within which policymakers operate. Political processes that influence decision-making are described as having their 'own (usually) implicit rules, in which outcomes are determined by the relative resources devoted by each participant to the achievement of some satisfactory solution' (McGrew and Wilson 1982:10). Political gains or losses therefore have to be considered when assessing the process of decision-making as to have a better understanding of the 'incentives' policymakers have for promoting or avoiding certain decisions. This latter view can be associated with public choice theories of policy making which, starting from an understanding of the rational self-interested behaviour of policy makers, focus on the need to introduce measures to control the negative effects of the latter, and which can be seen, for instance in the growth of bureaucracies (Bacchi 1999:19)⁵⁴.

What the last two models do is make the rational actor model more complex, therefore accounting 'better' for the constraints and demands that policymakers confront and which considerably influence both decisions and the expected outcomes of the latter. The two latter models seem to be taking on the critique made to the rational actor model's 'expectation that the policy process will be an organized and systematic one' (Hill 1997:10). By incorporating organisational and political elements, some newer approaches aim at accounting for the complexity of policy making. Although closer to political accounts of policy, Hill's (1997) own approach can be seen in these terms, as he portrays the policy process as an open system with constant influences from the 'environment' in which policy making takes place, and where demands, support, and ongoing information and questions about specific policies have to be balanced in the policy process. Policy is therefore seen as an everchanging process, with no clear beginning and end (see John 1998) – a perspective that directly challenges 'stages models' of policy making⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ See also Geddes (2000b), who discusses the failure of reforms in Latin America as the outcome of politicians pursuing their own self-interest rather than social wellbeing.

⁵⁵ There are considerable differences and similarities between approaches in the presented trends in policy analysis which sometimes blur the boundaries between approaches (see John 1998; Sabatier 1999).

The challenge to rational actor models of policy making appears to be even more relevant for states – like Peru – that are ‘still struggling to achieve a legitimate superordinate role’ (Hill 1997:10) in terms of the coordination of human activities throughout a specific territory – as was discussed in earlier chapters. Geddes (2000a), for instance, without challenging the rational actor model, suggests it has limited explanatory capacities in the Latin American context, where the ‘rules governing the survival and advancement’ (p.84) of individuals in the public sector – another aspect of institutional weakness - are unclear. Grindle and Thomas (1991) pursue a similar line of discussion that starts from the assertion that ‘[p]olicy making and implementation processes in many developing countries look *superficially* like they do in Western industrial societies (my stress)’ (p.44). Beyond the surface, however, they are characterised by ‘uncertain information, poverty, pervasive state influence in the economy, centralization of decision making’ (p.45), not to speak of corruption and the fact that ‘state action is always open to dispute’ (p.57) due to legitimacy problems. As Geddes (2000a) suggests, then, rational actor explanations require a more clearly structured environment as to explain, predict or prescribe policy paths. In the case of policy environments like that of Peru, a model assuming the instability and constant change of demands and constraints, like that proposed by Hill (1997), would seem more adequate.

Also attempting to develop an approach better geared to the explanation of complexity in policy making, John (1998) proposes an ‘evolutionary model’ in which he integrates the contributions of different approaches to policy analysis. After reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches, the author takes the position that each sheds light on particular aspects of policy making, and concludes that integration is the most adequate move. In this he follows recent evolutionary models that highlight the importance of cooperation and not only competition as an evolutionary strategy⁵⁶. In the case of policy theories then, integration (i.e. cooperation) would be the most appropriate solution:

‘The institutions are sets of constraints upon actors that can sometimes be reshaped if actors so choose. Interests are important because they structure the sets of choices for other actors. Economic power structures similarly offer alternative choices. Individual self-interest drives the machine and interacts with the constraints. Ideas provide solutions and meanings for policy-makers.

⁵⁶ The author refers specifically to the work of Dawkins on genetic evolution (John 1998:183).

But what drives policy is the continual interaction between these features.’
(John 1998:183)⁵⁷

Here one could take on Sabatier’s (1999) suggestion that frameworks that involve an increased degree of ‘logical interconnectedness and specificity’ tend to decrease their explanatory ‘scope’ (p.6), as they are unable to account in detail for any of the aspects under consideration. Sabatier’s own model, for instance, proposes to set the focus of analysis on ‘advocacy coalitions’, that is, on the interactions between different coalitions ‘each consisting of actors from a variety of institutions who share a set of beliefs within a policy subsystem’, and where ‘policy change is a function of both competition within the subsystem and events outside the subsystem’ (p.9). Sabatier’s critique notwithstanding, his own model can be seen to account for a greater degree of complexity than the more linear stages and rational-actor models of policy making.

Although these more recent developments can be seen as a step-forward in the understanding of the complex process of policy making – especially when compared to the more linear and limited models that were predominant during the early years of the discipline of policy analysis – they appear to have some fundamental weaknesses. As Bacchi (1999) shows, approaches within this perspective tend to assume that ‘there is a readily identifiable social/economic problem which needs addressing and that policy makers get together and do their best to come up with a policy which will address this problem (p.17). The trouble with this is that it leaves the process of problem definition or representation untouched, excluding the possibility that problem representations themselves might be problematic and the product of power struggles. Even the most complex theories that do account for power in policy making tend to overlook the need to contest problem representations.

The problem, more than one of adequate conceptualisation of the policy process seems to lie at the level of epistemological assumptions. Here Fischer (2003) joins Bacchi (1999) in criticising the empiricist and neo-positivist approach to knowledge that is characteristic of the technical-rationalist approach. Fischer suggests that the discipline of policy analysis has generally been based on the ‘general sense that better information would lead to better solutions’ (p.11). This is more or less clear from the positions that have been discussed, and is expressed in attempts to develop more complex understandings of policy making, but which express ‘little

⁵⁷ The quote illuminates the integration of the different perspectives discussed in detail by John (1998): implementation analysis, rational choice models, institutional approaches, group and network approaches, socio-economic approaches, ideas based approaches

sense at the outset that policy problems [are] as much the result of socio-political interpretations as they [are] concrete manifestations of relatively fixed social processes' (p.11). This, according to Fischer, and also Bacchi, is the outcome of a perspective on knowledge that overlooks that our perceptions and definitions of social problems are inextricably connected to values, and that '[n]o matter how efficient a programme might be, if it fails to confront the basic value frames that shape out understandings of the problem, it is bound to be rejected' (Fischer 2003: 12)⁵⁸. This critique takes on post-empiricist developments, which stress the inseparability of facts and values, and take on a more social constructionist approach that emphasises that reality is always interpretively mediated.

9.2 POLITICS AND POLICY MAKING

The movement within the discipline of policy analysis shows increasing concern with developing accounts of the ways in which normative elements (i.e. values, politics) enter the policy making process. Although this represents a considerable change in comparison to technical-rationalist approaches the aims of these two trends are not far from each other. Political rationalists, as Bacchi (1999) calls them, are still concerned with coming up with better ways in which to solve problems, the main difference is that they recognise that values and political concerns often interfere in the process. The main difference then, between technical and political rationalists, lies in the way in which they 'approach policy problems', the former put the emphasis on 'analysis', while the latter highlight 'interaction' between groups and individuals (Bacchi 1999:25).

Lindblom and Woodhouse (1993), for instance, are particularly critical of stages models of policy making, and their portrayal of policy making as a rational process. For them, policy making 'resembles more a "primeval soup"', where policies rise and change continuously as they are matched with political concerns (p.10). They also stress that 'policy might emerge without any explicit decision, by failure to act' or 'may be an unintended byproduct of some other action' (p.11). This leads the authors to develop an incrementalist model of policy making, where policy analysis has to follow policies as they develop, assessing change within policy programmes and their objectives as the policies develop. As Hoppe (1999) shows, this constitutes 'an

⁵⁸ There are some important differences between Bacchi and Fischer that will be discussed below, but I think their critique of technical-rationalist models using post-empiricist arguments is very similar.

enormous step towards a fallibilist and learning concept of rationality' (p.13) which contrasts with the rather unproblematised and neo-positivist tenet of technical-rationalists in relation to the cognitive and scientific superiority of policy analysts. Political rationalists work under the assumption that human beings have limited cognitive capacities that do not allow them to have a clear picture, or develop a clear and definite solution to policy problems (Bacchi 1999:25). The analyst is then seen as a political strategist, rather than a scientist in the neo-positivist sense (Bacchi 1999:25), and his role is one of 'piecemeal social engineering' or incremental improvement (Hoppe 1999:14)⁵⁹.

The main criticisms that have been made of this perspective have to do with the fact that, as in the case of technical-rationalists, they leave the nature of problem representations untouched, and focus on providing 'better' accounts of how policy goes on in practice. The analyst is still seen as a largely objective player, capable of considering and balancing choices in each step of the policy process. On the other hand, the fallibilist model itself has been questioned by post-empiricist critics, who stress the interpretive nature of scientific practice. This is especially so in the realm of social theories, which 'unlike physical ones, are difficult to falsify with experimental data because the interpretation of such data is mediated by the assumptions, frames of reference, and ideologies of social scientists and other stakeholders in reform' (Dunn quoted in Hoppe 1999:16). But even in the natural science it has become clear that 'science measures an *interpretation* of the object rather than the object per se', and '[u]nder such circumstance, the possibility of conclusive disproof has to be largely ruled out' (Fischer 2003:126)⁶⁰.

Although political-rationalists' portrayal of policy differs considerably from that of technical-rationalists their assumptions about the development of truth and knowledge are fairly close. For Hoppe (1999) they are part of one same tradition which is initially associated with analycentrism and neo-positivism, and then moves towards a critical-rationalist perspective (or what Bacchi (1999) defines as political rationalism). This is the trend described in the first pages of this chapter, in which we

⁵⁹ Hoppe (1999) establishes a link between this position and Popper's falsificationism, the contribution of which can be seen in terms of promoting an 'attitude' towards knowledge that is based on the permanent questioning of ones ideas and positions. As will be seen below, Popper's views have been criticised more in terms of his depiction of scientific method and the possibilities of falsificationism as an approach to scientific practice.

⁶⁰ Haig (1995) establishes a useful distinction between data and phenomena, the latter being the 'relatively stable, recurrent features of the world that we seek to explain' and which are only theoretically or interpretively apprehensible (i.e. as data)

On a different line Lakatos and Musgrave (1970) argue against the falsificationist depiction of science. They suggest that error or counterproof in science is entirely expected, and that theories are not renounced when they appear, but rather adapt to enhance their explanatory capacity, and are only abandoned when better (more robust) theories are developed.

saw how definitions of policy have moved towards more complex accounts that include the consideration of politics as a fundamental element of policy making. In this sense, a perspective such as Hill's (1997) lies on the more political side of the continuum described by all these perspectives, and which is characterised by the unproblematic approach to knowledge and problem representation. As Fischer (2003) notes, in spite of the increasing acknowledgement of the pervasiveness of politics in policy making, political rationalist approaches still have 'little sense... that policy problems [are] as much the result of socio-political interpretations as they were concrete manifestations of relatively fixed problems' (p.11). Accounting for the generally interpretive nature of policy, as well as of knowledge more broadly, has been the focus of theorisations based on a post-empiricist perspective.

9.3 THE POST-POSITIVIST TURN IN POLICY ANALYSIS

Critiques of technical and political rationalist approaches have led to what Hoppe (1999) describes as a 'post-positivist turn' in policy analysis. This refers to a change of perspective based on post-positivist epistemological developments that emphasise the theoretical and interpretive nature of our relation to the world.

In spite of the common epistemological standpoint, however, the body of literature that has risen from this turn is rather heterogeneous. As will be discussed below, approaches tend to differ in their conceptualization of 'the real' which leads to different positions in relation to the possibility and form of engagement with practices of policy making. Such differences stem from authors' allegiance to critical or post-structuralist traditions and lead, in the first case, to a commitment with communicative or deliberative practices (in the manner of Habermas), and in the other to more agonistic practices of policy analysis in terms of contestation and deconstruction of problem representations (Bacchi 1999).

9.3.1 Critical Policy Analysis

Hoppe (1999) locates the work of authors such as Forester and Dryzek within the first line of analysis. They embrace critiques of empiricism and positivism, which they see not only as portraying a misleading picture of scientific development, but also as conducive to the alienation of common citizens from politics and policy making, which are portrayed as the realm of experts. This matches Habermas' (1981) famous critique of the 'uncoupling of lifeworld and system', which is the basis of his argument

on how the modern project of improving life through rational means has been led astray. This view is critical of both pluralist approaches to policy making for their claims to value neutrality, and technical-rationalist approaches that lead to the 'scientization of policymaking by the state through methodologies such as policy analysis and planning', and which 'has been one of the primary strategies for carrying out [a] depolitization [of governance]' (Fischer 2003:36). While recognising that power differences shape political and technical arguments, Habermas advocates a shift towards deliberative democratic practices of policy making (Kelly 2004) and is committed to an 'improvement' of social conditions through a better connection between politics and everyday life. In this way, theorists such as Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) emphasise the need to arrive at shared problem definitions through engagement in public discussions or in 'communities of action' (p.11)⁶¹

Habermas and his followers in what as Hoppe (1999) describes as a 'critical-theoretical approach', propose that rather than abandoning reason – as supposedly some of his adversaries in the post-structuralist or so called post-modern tradition⁶² propose – we should attempt to rescue it through a reconnection of lifeworld and system. Rationality should be revamped by means of critical thinking aiming at bridging the gap between citizens' everyday practices and the realm of politics and 'social engineering'. This aim, for Habermas, can be achieved by boosting a 'public sphere' through participatory practices. The latter would create a space for citizens and policy makers to engage in dialogue about common values and social aims, and would be based on a 'communicative ethics' derived from an 'ideal speech situation in which people communicate free from power relations, deception and self-deception' (Hoppe 1999:19). The move is from allegedly technical considerations of policy to a more normatively guided policy process, where notions of 'the good life' in the Aristotelian sense, rather than considerations of evidence or technique, guide decisions. The approach to policy making that stems from these views therefore emphasises discursive participation 'with an eye to the quality of decisionmaking and the authenticity of consensus formation' (Hoppe 1999:20). The emphasis on 'critical' discourse and theory that stems from Habermas' perspective refers to the importance of deliberation as a means to 'liberate' policy 'from the narrow play of

⁶¹ A term they borrow from Hanna Arendt.

⁶² Although I will not go into a detailed discussion of this here, I think the term post-modern is problematic, and possibly inadequate, as it indicates a kind of move away from any kind of practical or epistemological commitments. It is, I think, what leads to charges of nihilism or relativism in the case of thinkers such as Foucault and Derrida. The term post-structuralism on the other hand, refers more specifically to the critique of foundationalist and totalising theories that such thinkers were committed to, but do not necessarily entail a denial of reality or a relinquishing of political commitments - this is particularly clear in the case of Derrida (see Clark 2003).

interests' (Fischer 2003:46) to which it is tied when left exclusively in the hands of politicians and policy makers (i.e. when there is little or no citizen participation).

This perspective, and Habermas' proposals more broadly, has been the target of criticisms that highlight that the idea of the public sphere and deliberative democracy with equal participation of citizens in the public sphere presumes a shared rationality and values. Apart from the ideal, and therefore rather unreal, possibilities of egalitarian dialogue and consensus formation over certain fundamental aspects of human life, critics like Fraser (1992), have argued that Habermas' conception of the public sphere conceals the fact that modern dialogic rationality and values already express a form of dominant discourse which has potentially excluding consequences. According to Fraser, Habermas has a 'bourgeois, masculinist conception of the public sphere' (pp.117, 118) that overlooks the fundamental impossibility of fully overcoming power and status differences when engaging in deliberation. Beyond formal limitations to participation class, ethnicity and gender differences will be reflected in access and participation to public deliberation. Furthermore, Fraser highlights how the public sphere can be the 'institutional site for the construction of the consent that defines the new hegemonic mode of domination' (p.117). So the idea of consensus itself is tied to the establishment of dominant discourses and practices tending to normalise life in ways that will inevitably conceal difference and exclusion.

The notion of ethics as justice and equality that guides Habermas' thought seems to conceal or overlook the asymmetries of social life, where difference, rather than equality appears to characterise social relations. As Critchley (1999b) suggests, the ethics of justice tends to overlook the 'curvature of social space' (p.269) and all that it implies in terms of the distance and difference between human beings, where 'otherness' cannot be dissolved into egalitarian modes of organisation. In doing this, Habermas is more focused on the moral and legal aspects of social life, where the principle of equal treatment is fundamental (Critchley 1999b:265).

Although the influence of Habermas' thought on the public sphere and deliberative democracy is what characterises developments within this strand of policy analysis, some authors seem to have taken on some of the criticisms discussed above. In this way, the work of Fischer (2003), for instance, has a foot on both the critical and the post-structuralist traditions. Although the possibility of combining these two traditions of thought will be discussed below, I shall consider Fischer's proposals in some detail as to pave the way for the final discussion.

Fischer bases his conception of deliberative policy making on a critique of empiricism and neo-positivism which leads him to stress 'the theoretical construction of the empirical realm' which 'calls for the use of interpretive methods to probe the presuppositions that discursively structure social perceptions, organize 'facticity', and deem events as normal, expected or natural' (Fischer 2003:14). By acknowledging that reality is always interpretively or theoretically mediated Fischer stands at a definite distance from the positivist tradition. Moreover, he explicitly states that his conception of a post-empiricist stance for policy analysis draws from social-constructionism, critical theory and post-structuralism. In different ways they all constitute critiques of post-empiricism. The integration of the three, however is what seems interesting and relates to the points I want to make in the end of this chapter.

Social-constructionism and post-structuralism in particular provide Fischer with a conceptualisation about the elusive nature of reality⁶³, which means that all theories are temporary and contestable. This, however, does not mean there is no base for choosing among competing theories – I will come to this again later. Moreover, Fischer incorporates Foucault's ideas on the way in which discourse shapes all practices, including the perspectives and practices of the policy analyst. While acknowledging this, however, Fischer, rather than relinquishing the possibility of political participation or engagement (as some authors reviewed below seem to do), suggests that this should lead to a particular kind of democratic politics. 'Recognising social reality to be a human construction, the focus shifts to the circumstantial context and discursive processes that shape the construction' (Fischer 2003:130). It is this more pragmatic commitment and the fact that he conceives democracy in terms of deliberative practices where Fischer is influenced by critical theory.

Fischer's conception of policy as deliberation draws heavily on the work of Giandomenico Majone (1989), for whom policy should be conceived fundamentally as an argumentative process. Even the concept of evidence is reframed in terms of *selected* information that is 'introduced at a specific point in the argument in order to persuade a particular audience of the truth or falsity of a statement' (Majone 1989:11)⁶⁴. As in the case of Fischer, for Majone, the emphasis on the interpretive nature of our knowledge of reality has specific consequences for political action, which have to do with thinking about ways in which policy argumentation takes place.

⁶³ Note this is not to be taken as a statement about the inexistence of reality.

⁶⁴ My emphasis on the word selected is to stress that evidence is not self-evident, it is – following the post-empiricist critique- always theoretically mediated and, as Majone suggests, strategically framed to support certain arguments.

In a way that resembles Barnett's (2003) conception of democracy – discussed below - as 'the giving of reasons and inviting responses' (p.196), Majone argues that:

'to recognize that policy analysis has less to do with proof and computation than with the process of argument is to make contact with an old philosophical tradition that defines rationality not in instrumental terms, but as the ability to provide acceptable reasons for one's choices' (p.23)

This process of argumentation understood as the giving of reasons is fundamental to Majone's understanding of consensus (or continuity) and change in policy making. Deliberation in his view should lead to some degree of settlement as to better ways to proceed, which, however, are contestable in time. In order to explain this, Majone develops a definition of the process of policy making that is analogous to the portrayal of scientific development presented by philosopher Imre Lakatos (1970), and which is especially relevant for the present study of policy discontinuity. According to him, policy should be understood both in terms of continuity and change. Continuity is given by the 'hard core' or assumptions, values, definitions of certain problems, which remain more or less stable in time, while discontinuity is what gives policy adaptability, in the sense that 'many values, assumptions, methods, goals and programs are disposable, modifiable, or replaceable by new ones' (p.150)⁶⁵.

I will come back to this definition of policy later in the data analysis chapters, where it will be argued that discontinuity in Peruvian education policies has to do with the lack of definition of a policy core due to the particular policy cultures that arise in the context of existing institutional arrangements. For now I just want to note that change in this conception of policy is closely related to the notion of argumentation, as policies will or should change due to better arguments being developed to support changes. The robustness of arguments, or their relation to normative notions of the common good, as well of course, as evidence in the sense discussed above, should determine the rejection of policies or changes in policy directions. This is the sense in which Majone considers that deliberation can lead to the improvement of policy making – improvement in the sense of making the process more democratic, with policy makers being held accountable for their decisions and having to provide solid arguments or reasons for their actions.

⁶⁵ According to Lakatos (Lakatos and Musgrave 1970) this is precisely the way in which the natural sciences proceed: there is a hard-core of assumptions that is surrounded by a series of more flexible 'protective belts'. This explains both the possibility of normal science and paradigmatic change.

Like Fischer and Majone, other authors like Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) seem to share some of these conceptions. For them the idea of consensus building should not be conflated with the 'definitive resolution of a problem', but rather with 'the discovery of a workable definition of the problem, or the temporary stabilization of a situation' (p.23)⁶⁶. How to reach such temporary stabilisations and how to ensure that they are temporary is the focus of deliberative policy analysis.

9.3.2 Post-structuralist approaches to policy analysis

A different strand in policy analysis is more exclusively related to post-structuralism. Here the emphasis is put on the way in which discourse - in the case of Habermas the discourse of rationality, dialogue and consensus – expresses and defines particular ways of thinking. In this case, rather than an emphasis on critical theory as a means to 'rescue' rationality, theorists take on post-structuralist critiques that point to the difficulty of establishing one superior or accepted mode of discourse (i.e. rational discourse in the case of Habermas). The work of Foucault has been particularly influential here and has set the focus of policy theory on discourse analysis, while theorists following the work of Derrida place the focus on the deconstruction of policy problems.

As Olssen *et al.* (2004) explain, 'Foucault was interested in discerning how cultural formations were made to appear 'rational' and 'unified', how particular discourses came to be formed and what rules lay behind the process of formation' (p.19). It is the lack of concern with how discourses 'normalise' practices that authors like Bacchi (1999) question about critical policy theorists, a flaw that leads them to focus on processes of argumentation as to improve the outcome of discourses, rather than on the practices reflected and installed by discourses.

The work of Bacchi (1999) lies within the post-structuralist strand of policy analysis. She goes so far as to deny that authors like Fischer, who explicitly elaborate their post-empiricist standpoint, are actually post-empiricists due to their commitment to 'improving' the conditions of policy argumentation. For her, a post-structuralist stance seems to be incompatible with political engagement in the way that deliberative policy analysts propose. In contrast to this, Bacchi elaborates a 'What's the problem?' approach, in which she suggests that policy analysis should focus on

⁶⁶ A similar conception can be found in 'Unpopular Education' (Education Group - Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1981) where the authors develop the notion of policy 'settlements'.

problem representations, thus questioning the specific power relations that such representations produce, reproduce, conceal or maybe help change. Bacchi argues that critical policy theorists following the lines of Habermas neglect the existence of 'contending representations at work at every level of discussion – about acceptability, affordability and availability' (p.37). So rather than trying to create better conditions for consensus building and deliberation, the analyst should be aware of the implications of problem representations as well as of the kinds of power relations that they express or give rise to. For Bacchi the difference between her own approach and that of deliberative policy theorists is 'a shift in focus from the role of values in policy making to the production of meaning' (p.39). 'Applied to the policy field, an interest in discourse becomes an interest in the ways in which arguments are structured, and objects and subjects are constituted in language' (Bacchi 1999:41).

9.3.3 A critical post-structuralist approach to policy: is such a thing possible?

Although I take Bacchi's point that some critical policy theorists do not fully question the idea of policy as discourse and the role of discourse in policy – focusing, rather, only on the rules of communicative practice - I do not entirely agree with her suggestion that this necessarily denotes a lingering empiricism. Besides, some developments from 'critical-policy theorists' show a concern for both critical theory and discourse analysis – this is clearly the case of Fischer's (2003) most recent work, in which he combines the work of Foucault and Habermas to elaborate his perspective on deliberative policy analysis⁶⁷.

I think the problem with Bacchi's work, and therefore with the distinction she makes between critical and post-structuralist approaches, has to do with her conceptualisation of 'the real'. Her position is made clear in the following statement: 'It needs to be made clear that there is no assumption in the use of this language [of representation] that there is a reality which stands outside representation' (p.37). This, I would argue, leads Bacchi away from any pragmatist commitment to the improvement of policy and political practices, as is the case with critical policy theorists, and into the realm of representations. It is in this relinquishing of reality that I think Bacchi goes too far. I entirely agree with the idea that we can only apprehend reality through interpretation or theory, that is, that there is only interpretively

⁶⁷ It should be noted that in 1999 Bacchi already perceived a change among critical policy theorists towards a better conceptualisation of problem representations in policy. This trend is now evident in Fischer's (2003) work.

mediated reality. However, although this implies overcoming metaphysical notions of truth as correspondence, I think it should not necessarily entail an anti-realist position. By denying the existence of a reality ‘out there’, Bacchi falls into what Bhaskar (1997) typifies as a common mistake of reducing ontology to epistemology (the *epistemic fallacy* in Bhaskar’s terms), or what even a discourse theorist like Laclau (Laclau *et al.* 1998) criticises as the ‘reduction of the real to thought’. This means that acknowledging the discursive or theoretical nature or the way in which we apprehend reality does not entail the denial of reality as such, at an ontological level.

Bacchi seems to conflate the notion of realism with that of foundationalism or correspondence theory. For her, the fact that we cannot prove the correspondence of our statements with ‘reality’ seems to entail the inexistence of reality. However, various forms of non-foundationalist realism have been articulated in the recent past (see Bhaskar 1997; Davidson 1986), which on the one hand clearly posit the ontological status of reality, and on the other try to develop a basis for choosing between judgements about that reality. Davidson (1986), for instance, develops a ‘coherence theory of truth and knowledge’, where coherence and, I would add the argumentative coherence or robustness in the sense discussed by Majone (1989), is a condition to assess the ‘truth of judgements’ – policies in this case – without confrontation with reality or recourse to ‘evidence’ in the empiricist sense. As will be discussed below, the emphasis on coherence, which as Davidson himself suggests, can never be complete⁶⁸, opens up representation to deliberation, as advocated by Fischer (2003), particularly in the case of political or policy arguments. Bhaskar (Laclau and Bhaskar 1998), on the other hand, has stronger arguments about the connection of knowledge and theory to reality, which suggests that ‘there are causal interactions between discursive practices or reasons and extra-discursive realities’ (p.13), but at the same time ‘all extra-discursive realities are constituted within discursive practice, from the point of view of their intelligibility’ (p.13).

Bacchi’s stance seems to derive from a kind of common interpretation of post-structuralist or so called post-modern thought which has been the target of critical theorists under claims of relativism – and which amounts to the reduction of reality to thought or discourse⁶⁹. Bacchi explicitly addresses the problem of relativism, but I

⁶⁸ ‘[I]t is absurd to look for a justifying ground for the totality of beliefs, something outside this totality which we can use to test or compare with our beliefs. The answer to our problem [of relativism or scepticism] must then be to find a *reason* for supposing most of our beliefs are true that is not a form of *evidence* [in the metaphysical or objectivist sense]’ (1986).

⁶⁹ It is important to stress here that in recent years there has been a shift in these common interpretations of post-modern thought, as authors have challenged interpretations about the alleged

think the statement quoted above is a trap that she cannot completely escape, and which demands a more complex conceptualisation of the nature of reality and interpretation, such as that offered by Davidson or Bhaskar, or such as indeed can be found among post-structuralist thinkers as Foucault and Derrida. Bacchi's approach to policy analysis seems to stand on a misconception of the implications of assuming the interpretive nature of knowledge. So while offering a valuable contribution to the conceptualisation of policy problems and of policy as discourse, it cannot, I think, be taken as an approach to policy making - something that is particularly important when looking at the problem of discontinuity. If analysis of discontinuity were concerned with the content of specific policy discourses Bacchi's perspective might fit better. I am not saying that her focus on policy as discourse or as problem representation is inadequate, but rather that it is insufficient when looking at the processes of policy making. The major problem in her approach is that it attempts to overcome the limitations of the so called critical policy theorists, but lacks the more pragmatic elements that critical theory does seem to offer.

Bacchi's attempt to overcome the relativism of her anti-realist position lies at the core of what I find problematic in her approach. She quotes Nancy Fraser to show why 'an analysis that focuses on problem representation does not leave us trapped in language'. '[I]nterpretations' according to Fraser, 'are not merely representations – they are acts or interventions'. Hence, concludes Bacchi, 'we can and must comment on the nature of the interventions which accompany particular representations' (p.38/39). I think the use of the word 'comment' to describe what analysts can strive to do reflects Bacchi's anti-realist and anti-pragmatist position, as it does not say anything about the possibility or need to change practices. In this, critical theorists have a much stronger and politically involved position that I find much more useful when thinking about very real problems of social injustice such as poverty, inequality, etc. or indeed about the ineffectiveness of the policy machinery, as in the case of discontinuity. Of course, when thinking about such problems it is important to take on Bacchi's stress on discourse and to analyse the implications of different representations. But this, I think, is only one aspect of analysis.

Fischer's (2003) most recent work suggests that it is possible not only to combine a discourse analytic with a critical perspective, but that the emphasis on policy as discourse actually leads towards highlighting deliberation, albeit in more complex ways that are not necessarily tied to notions of consensus building. For him:

anti-realist stance (and therefore nihilism or immorality) of authors such as Foucault and Derrida (see Critchley 1999b; Olssen 2004; see Pryke *et al.* 2003).

'The goal [of deliberative policy analysis] is to improve policy argumentation by illuminating contentious questions, identifying the strengths and limitations of supporting evidence, and elucidating the political implications of contending positions. In the process, the task is to increase communicative competencies, deliberative capacities, and social learning' (p.202)

As discussed above, this conception of deliberation is not tied to any view of policy as final solution or consensus over objectively identifiable problems. Furthermore, the possibility of getting involved in promoting such deliberative practices and capacities stems, I believe, from Fischer's realist, although still post-empiricist, position. Whereas for Bacchi the post-empiricist critique led to the complete abandonment of the concept of reality for that of interpretation or representation, for Fischer (2003) 'public policies are not only influenced by the discourses of particular groups, they are shaped and supported by the institutional processes in which specific discursive practices are embedded, processes which can have a life of their own' (p.45). Fischer, then, appears to have a much more materialistic position than Bacchi. Most importantly, such a materialist conception of reality, locates Fischer closer to recent readings of so-called post-modern thinkers, which suggest a much more robust and materialist conception of reality than some interpreters have assumed (see Olssen 2004; Pryke *et al.* 2003).

In Fischer's view, it is precisely the emphasis on discourse that opens up a link towards deliberative practices and democratic politics. Although the combination of post-structuralist and critical approaches leads Fischer to formulate a conception of policy as linked to democracy but not necessarily to notions of consensus building (as can be found in more Habermasian policy theorists such as Dryzek (see Hoppe 1999)), it might be necessary to consider some of the dangers of emphasising communicative practices. As Barnett (2003) warns, the view of 'politics as communication is simultaneously a highly idealistic image, which holds the promise of agreement and consensus, and a cynically realist one, in which politics is reduced to a zero-sum clash of opposed principles and interests' (p.3).

Barnett's warning, which I think is taken on in Fischer's conceptualisation of deliberative politics⁷⁰, refers on one hand to the dangers of believing in the possibility of consensus, since, following the Foucauldian warning, any kind of consensus will install and reflect a new discourse with potentially excluding consequences. On the

⁷⁰ For Fischer 'Although answers are not worked out by rigid adherence to the scientific methods of demonstration and verification, interpretive understandings can be based on the giving of reasons and the assessment of arguments' (Fischer 2003:53).

other hand it warns against the danger of thinking that participation in communicative practices will eventually lead to perfecting political practices through a full identification between citizens' demands and political responses. For Barnett the emphasis on deliberative practices of policy making should be understood in the context of a conception of democracy as an always incomplete process, as 'a boundary concept, whose meaning is inherently connected to movements of translation and reconceptualization' (Connolly quoted in Barnett 2003:2), and not as tied to consensus building or perfect identification between policy and citizen will⁷¹. The idea of consensus, which presupposes the ideal possibility of perfect agreement, could be replaced by notions of settlement (Education Group - Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1981) or temporary agreement (Majone 1989), which denote a fundamental openness to contestation and therefore entail a disposition towards argumentation and deliberation.

Barnett follows Iris Marion Young's deconstructive critical theory. Young, although committed to deliberative forms of democracy, questions many advocates of deliberation for their emphasis on consensus. This is particularly the case of Habermas, for whom, deliberation in the public sphere presupposes the possibility of arriving at universal agreements. For Young 'The fundamental question is whether the notion of generalisable interests necessarily implies shared, universal interests that can be articulated in a universally shared language of justification' (p.62). As Barnett highlights:

'A fully inclusive conception of dialogic reason must forswear the ideals of impartial universalistic reason, replacing the assumption that communication depends on *a priori* foundations of understanding with a notion of public deliberation in terms of translation.' (p.62).

This means also that deliberation is favoured as a process, rather than as a means for consensus. Barnett's view, however, differs from agonistic models of democracy – that 'tend towards a purification of the political, which contrasts the closure of instrumental decision-making to the infinite semiosis of subject-formation' (p.12)⁷² - in that, as he states from the beginning, he is well aware of the pragmatic dimension

⁷¹ Barnett (2003) questions certain idealised conceptions of participatory democracy which he sees as resting 'on the assumption that the same social subjects, gathered together in a forum of mutual communication, should participate in deliberation and carry out decision-making' (p.10). Such practices, which are seen as overcoming the limits of representative democracy, rest on a 'logic of identity' that assumes the possibility of full identification between citizen wills and political practices, or, more fundamentally, the stability of citizens' wills across time.

⁷² Agonistic models of democracy and policy making conceive political processes as permanently open, and question the moment of decision in favour of a permanent political movement. Bacchi's (1999) approach, I think, lies within this trend. But as Barnett warns, 'Agonism is an end, and only one element, of democratic political action, not its essence' (p.13).

that both democracy and deliberation should have. For Barnett, 'the value of communicative practices of public deliberation cannot be properly grasped if it is detached from the objective of arriving at binding decisions' (p.12). But the latter have to be seen in the context of 'giving reasons and inviting responses', rather than as permanently valid positions. Representative democracy is a system that enables 'binding decisions and effective public action in the absence of final agreement' (p.12) – something that, as Majone (1989) suggests, leads to the idea of democracy as a system of government by discussion.

This view of democracy, and of policy more generally, as based on a deliberative process, understood as a process of permanent translation that leads to the 'articulation of promises, giving reasons, and a willingness to talk and listen' (p.63) is quite contrary to the cultures of policy making that have been found in the analysis of discontinuity and which are examined in the data analysis section. In spite of differences between the policy makers' narratives, each of them suggests an image of the policy process in which individuals appropriate the space for policy making and reject the need to both give reasons and invite responses. The tendency is rather to redefine the space and discourse of policy by imposing individual views. The existence of such 'cultures of policy making' can be partly explained by reference to institutional problems, but they can also be seen as contributing or reproducing such problems. In any case, it is the interaction between institutional elements and policy making cultures that seems to explain the problem of discontinuity.

A reconceptualisation of policy practices with these ideas on deliberation, 'the giving of reasons' and the permanent invitation for people to respond, question and engage in dialogue, sheds some light as to the possible orientation one could take to 'improve' the conditions of education policy making in Peru. In this, I am aware, I might be taking a step towards a more committed position that gets me out of the more protected and comfortable position of critic to the realm of politics or policy making. But this might be an inevitable move in the consideration of a problem such as that of discontinuity (see Lauder *et al.* 2004).

Barnett's conception of policy and political practices in terms of the coming up with binding decisions, as well as in terms of a disposition towards the giving of reasons and inviting responses, combines critical and post-structuralist positions. Barnett is explicit about this, as his position, while being strongly based on Derrida's notion of deconstruction as a critique of the metaphysics of presence and the logic of identity – seen in struggles for consensus and a 'better' identification between citizens and political leaders - is also tied to the tradition of critical theory in terms of a

commitment to improve political practices through deliberation⁷³. In doing this, Barnett has to assume ‘the fundamental aporia in deconstruction... [which] is the relation between ethics and politics’ (Critchley 1999b:275), or, as Critchley puts it, the passage from undecidability to decision. This aporia or irresolvable tension that is inherent in the move from the undecidability stressed in post-empiricist notions of reality and representation, to decision, as seen in proposals for deliberative policy practices tied to notions of democracy and the making of binding decisions, does not mean, however, that politics should be renounced as Bacchi seems to propose. As Derrida⁷⁴ himself insists ‘judgements *have* to be made and decisions *have* to be taken, provided it is understood that they must pass through an experience of the undecidable’ (Critchley 1999a:275 [my stress]). Hence, an attitude towards the deconstruction of problem representations, as is presented by Bacchi, ‘would seem to be essentially connected to the possibility of political reformation, transformation and progress’ (Critchley 1999a:275).

Taking on post-structuralist critiques of knowledge, with their emphasis on discourse and deconstruction, while leading one away from totalising notions of truth and from ‘the problems of structuralism, which posited a single founding structure as the basis for explaining the nature of experience’ (Olssen 2004), does not necessarily imply renouncing politics. Although post-structuralist critiques have pointed to some fundamental problems in historical materialism and critical theory, their ‘commitment is to a form of ‘permanent criticism’ which must be seen as linked to [their] broader programme of freedom of thought’ (Olssen 2004:476)⁷⁵. This opens up the ‘ethical’ concerns of post-structuralist thinkers, who raise awareness about the excluding consequences of totalising discourses, to the realm of political action. In this sense, is it possible to ‘marry’ post-structuralist and critical theorists – as the title of Critchley’s (1999a) paper ‘Habermas and Derrida Get Married’ suggests. This allows for a more political attitude on the part of the policy analyst, or citizens in general – something that I think is missing in Bacchi’s (1999) approach, and which seems fundamental when considering the problem of education policy discontinuity. Discontinuity speaks of problems at the level of discourse formation as well as of social and political problems and the role of education in the Peruvian state. But it relates also to material and institutional practices of policy making. So while it is important to question education policy discourses and the possible meanings of

⁷³ Barnett (2003) is highly influenced by the pragmatist philosophy of William Dewey, who was deeply committed to the possibility of transforming social practices through a reinvigoration of the public (p.36).

⁷⁴ Allegedly one of the more politically uncommitted and immoral post-structuralist philosophers!

⁷⁵ Olssen is referring specifically to the work of Foucault, but I am using his ideas to refer to post-structuralist thought more broadly.

discontinuity, it is also important to keep an eye on the material practices of policy making that ultimately seem to delay the possibility of improving the quality of Peruvian public education.

By way of conclusion: this discussion about the possibility of ‘marrying’ a post-structuralist with a critical perspective has shown how it is possible to embrace a political project while at the same time acknowledging the elusive nature of reality and the incompleteness of representation. A deliberative attitude towards policy making appears to be a fundamental correlate of both tenets. Incorporating the principles of post-structuralism suggests that while engaging in deliberation one should always have a reflective attitude towards the way in which problems are being represented, as to de-stabilize them, show fissures within them, and point to the ways in which they normalise practices and give way to new hegemonic discourses. Such an attitude should be a fundamental aspect of the critical engagement of the policy analyst. But the latter should be tempered by pragmatic demands and limitations, which point towards the need to establish binding decisions as a fundamental element of government. Such decisions can be arrived at by deliberative practices, which, let us not forget, should also be tied to the giving of reasons and inviting responses.

With this in mind, it is important to remember that in order to devise new forms of policy making it is also necessary to understand the way in which policy actually operates. In this sense, different models of policy making can offer insights into the influence of networks, corporate interests, coalitions and other elements of policy making. Different perspectives shed light into the various layers of which a social practice like policy making is composed, and considering their contributions has heuristic value in that it might help develop a better understanding of problems like discontinuity.

9.4 SOME NOTES ON EDUCATION POLICY MAKING

The initial chapters of this section presented a discussion of various approaches to understanding the state and how they influence conceptions about education. Some of the issues considered constitute central debates in the field of education policy analysis. A Marxist perspective on the analysis of the state such as that presented by

Dale (1989) , for instance, suggested that the problems that emerge in the field of education policy are analogous to those that emerge at the core of capitalist states, which have to respond to contradictory demands. Ball (1994c), on the other hand, espoused what some have described as a more pluralist perspective, in which the state's influence appears to be counteracted by the capacities of actors in various levels of the education system. Through the discussion of the Peruvian case, I suggested that these two perspectives can be seen as complementary – a position that both Dale and Ball seem to sympathise with. While Dale's considerations focus on structural elements of state and society relations, Ball's perspective highlights the way in which agency exerted by different actors in the system can generate changes in policy. While the state has the capacity to define education policies, the latter do not constitute a monolithic set of prescriptions that will be transparently followed by all actors, but are rather subject to interpretation, contestation and change.

A similar perspective is presented by Vidovich (2001), who discusses state-centred and policy-cycle approaches to education policy. The former refers to those analyses that highlight how the state structures education and how this takes place amidst existing economic and political demands (the needs of capital, for instance). On the other hand, the policy-cycle view – as espoused by Ball - stresses the idea that policy takes place at all levels and is made by different actors, and not only by the central authorised body of policy makers. While central governments can have more or less capacity to impose policies, and have the legal backing to enforce them, actors at different levels reinterpret policies and adapt them to their practices, or even contest them. Moreover, while the more Marxist analyses point to a rather linear notion of power as interest based, Ball's Foucauldian perspective on power as discourse/knowledge, suggests a much more diffuse and pervasive idea of power, that is linked to various practices and ideologies. As Ball (1994c) suggests in his response to Hatcher and Troyna, we should avoid unnecessary dualisms and try to develop more complex understandings of policy making without falling into 'either/or' positions in relation to the capacities of the state *vis a vis* those of actors at different levels.

Majone's portrayal of policy making in terms of a core surrounded by a series of protective belts can help with this discussion. While central governments can be seen to have the capacity to redefine the core of policies – in specific areas or more generally, through comprehensive reforms – actors in different levels adapt those reforms to their own practices and change the policies without necessarily modifying the central tenets that were introduced by government officials. The way in which this

takes place in practice will probably depend on the structure of government and the degrees of centralisation/decentralisation. In the case of Peru, for instance, where the structure of government has been – at least until the application of recent decentralisation policies - highly centralised and hierarchical, the scope for redefinition might be less, although this does not mean that there is no interpretation, and therefore change, at every level.

The move towards a policy-cycle conception of policy can also be related to the changes in perspective on policy making and the move from technicist to post-empiricist analyses. While the understanding of policy in terms of central government statements corresponds to a more technicist understanding of policy making, the policy-cycle approach is more adapt to an understanding of policy making as a political process, where contestation and reinterpretation are present at all levels. As Vidovich (2001) shows, the emphasis on the micro-politics of education reform, which contributes to the policy-cycle view, was developed as part of a critique to existing analyses of policy, which focused only on official discourses, as if they defined exactly what went on in practice. This is the sense in which Ozga (quoted in Vidovich 2001) talks about the need to develop better theoretical perspectives for understanding policy, which should move away from a focus on the intentions of policy makers, to an understanding of how policy is appropriated, interpreted, changed and developed in all the other levels of education systems.

Much of the current body of education policy literature describes a move consistent with the trends in policy analysis which were discussed above. Ball's (1990) work, for instance, incorporates post-structuralist perspectives in order to analyse education policy discourses. For him, 'policies embody claims to speak with authority, they legitimate and initiate practices in the world, and they privilege certain visions and interests. They are power/knowledge configurations par excellence' (p.22).

The move towards the analysis of discourse and towards a policy-cycle view of policy is critical of more structuralist approaches to education policy, such as the one presented by Dale. For Ball (1990), 'education is not immediately and directly produced' by economic or interest based constraints. Rather, changes 'can be traced to ideological shifts and changing patterns of influence' (p.15). While I sympathise with this position, and have followed similar lines of enquiry in the study of discontinuity, I do take the view that social and economic factors offer a broad framework for the making of education policies. In this case, while I have attempted to trace the existence of policy discontinuity to 'ideological shifts and changing patterns of influence', I believe that understanding such shifts and changes requires

a focus on the role of education in state development – more in the lines argued by Dale. Using Ball's (1994a) terms, it can be said that education policy making takes place within a landscape that is underdetermined, but influenced by a multiplicity of factors. Structural elements such as the economic order that the state seeks to maintain, and the role that education plays in such a process, some of those factors. But the ideologies of policy makers, and how they are linked or give rise to dominant discourses about education also help define what goes on in education policy.

Introducing a different perspective that draws from the ideas of Bourdieu, Ladwig (1994) has developed the idea that education policy can be understood as a social field on its own, with more or less objective relations and a relative autonomy both from the field of education and from that of the State (Ladwig 1994). This idea suggests that policy making has certain dynamics that cannot be explained only in terms of their relation with the State and broad socio-economic processes, nor through their relation to educational needs or dominant ideologies, but, rather, 'as strategies by which players defend or advance their positions [within the field]. (...) [Thus, the] 'stances educational policy players take... are related to the player's position within the field of educational policy.' (p.345). In other words, much of what goes on in terms of education policy seems to be related to attempts by policy makers and education experts to gain or maintain positions of influence within the field itself, rather than with goals in terms of educational improvement or in terms of economic developments. As will be clarified below, this seems a particularly good description in the case of Peru.

While much of the existing literature on education policy focuses on the content of policies and attempts to trace its origins in structural or ideological elements, Ladwig's perspective opens up to considerations of the policy process itself. This view introduces important issues in relation to the conditions in which policy making takes place. The landscape of policy making is not only that of the broader socio-economic structures or existing dominant discourses; it is also the landscape of the education policy field itself. To a large extent, education policy in Peru seems to respond to issues of actors' positionality within the policy field, and thus, it is the topology of the field – the characteristics and positions of actors - that explains much of what goes on in education policy. What I am suggesting is that the internal dynamics of the field of policy making cannot be entirely explained by reference to broader structural or ideological elements, but need, in addition to the latter, considerations about the characteristics of the field itself. In part this is because in Peru the broader economic, social and political structures (i.e. highly centralised

decision-making, a weak institutional and political context, etc.) provide rather loose rules and constraints to the actions of policy makers, thus allowing for the greater prominence of agendas and individuals (Grindle and Thomas 1991; O'Donnell 1998; 1999), and the volatility of policy representations.

These ideas have been explored and developed through the data analysis presented in the following section.

PART IV - THE INSTITUTIONS AND CULTURES OF POLICY MAKING IN EDUCATION

In this section I will present the analysis of the interview data. The latter will be framed by an initial chronology of the main education policies and reforms that have been promoted between 1990 and 2004, and which helps convey an idea of the strong discontinuities that have dominated the policy arena. The interview data will then be analysed following two main lines. The first will present a thematic analysis with a focus on the institutional arrangements under which policy making takes place. The second will focus on 'policy narratives', that is, parts of the interviews on which the interviewees reflect on their experiences in policy making and which convey their views of policy making, the state and the problems faced in the policy process, and which are the basis for an understanding of how individual authorities act within the existing institutional arrangements⁷⁶.

CHAPTER 10 - CHRONOLOGY OF EDUCATION POLICIES AND REFORMS 1990 - 2004

10.1 FOCUS

The following pages focus on a chronology of the main education policy trends that can be identified in Peru between 1990 and 2004. 1990 marks the beginning of a ten year period in which Alberto Fujimori's government set a series of reforms in motion. Most of these reforms, as will be seen, did not achieve consolidation, and many have been revoked during the government of Alejandro Toledo.

Methodologically speaking, the period under study is particularly interesting because of the changes in the nature of the state under Fujimori and Toledo and as it marks an increase in awareness (not only in discourse but also as seen in investment patterns) about the need to reform the education system. A kind of hyperconsciousness has developed about the need to bring changes in education, which has brought an 'epidemic' of education policies (Levin 1998), which can be associated with trends in globalisation and the shift towards the development of

⁷⁶ For the purpose of helping the reader I have included at the end of the thesis both a glossary and a relation of people's names that appear during the interviews.

knowledge societies (Stehr 1994). Policies that are part of this 'epidemic' share certain basic characteristics: their justification in economic terms; criticism of schools and school administration; a move towards school autonomy; the introduction of choice and other market mechanisms to improve demand of quality from schools (e.g. strengthening parental participation and control of schools); no large increase in funding for education (Levin 1998)⁷⁷. At the level of application, the commonalities are less and there are considerable differences in policies –choice mechanisms, for instance, can range from privatisation to increased participation and influence of parents and local communities in school matters.

As will be seen below, Peru, as most of the Latin American region, is not extraneous to these trends. In this case, however, the hyperconsciousness about the need for reform in education has come accompanied by a large increase in funding, especially for reform programmes, from loan agreements with international organisations. The increase of funds and of proposals, however, has not yielded expected changes, at least not according to the ways in which desired changes are being measured. In spite of the common analytical framework, an educational discourse capable of guiding policies and reforms in practice has not consolidated. Interpretations of what needs to be done are thus varied and change constantly, creating an environment of discontinuity. As will hopefully become clear in the following pages, this relates to the role that education seems to play in the country, or in other words, the relation between education and the Peruvian state. But it also raises questions about the extent to which the new economic and political orthodoxy (as seen, for instance, in the principles discussed by Levin (1998) can be the basis for a more articulate approach to policy making in education.

10.2 THE FUJIMORI YEARS

Following Du Bois (2004), three main periods can be identified during the nineties in terms of education policies: an initial period in which there were two unsuccessful reform attempts, a second period in which the emphasis was put on school infrastructure, and a third period marked by the Education Quality Improvement

⁷⁷ The existence of such a common discourse is often staggering. I have often heard or read reports in which the problems of British education are analyzed in much the same terms as those of Peruvian education in spite of obvious differences: reference to standardised tests, decrease in educational quality, and the consequent need to introduce quality improvement reforms.

Programme (MECEP) which was funded with resources from international loans⁷⁸. After an initial period of economic, political and social stabilization in which the government of Fujimori effectively managed to stop mounting levels of inflation and control the terrorist activities of Sendero Luminoso by capturing its leader, education reform entered the government's social reform agenda. According to some, this emphasis on education came through pressures from the World Bank and other international organisations, which considered education a crucial part of the structural reform package.

10.2.1 The initial period (1991 - 1993)

During this first period, reform proposals focused on educational management, a trend that reflected the view that one of the main causes of educational stagnation was the extreme degree of administrative centralization and the complete lack of school autonomy. With this in mind, in 1991 the government issued a legal decree (D.L. 699⁷⁹) that promoted community participation in school administration through the creation of 'promoting entities' that could generate additional resources for schools (apart from those provided by the state) and which could participate in selection, changes and increases in the number of school personnel (i.e. teachers). This reform attempt elicited strong opposition from teachers, parents and even the Church, who claimed that the norm aimed to privatise education and that it thus breached the constitutional mandate that guaranteed free access to educational services. This opposition, together with the government's minority in Congress led to the final dismissal of the decree.

In 1992, after Fujimori had closed and reorganised Congress, thus achieving the majority vote, a series of laws were promulgated – the D.L. 26011 for 'Communal Participation in school management and administration'; the D.L. 26012 on 'School Funding'; and the D.L. 26013 for the 'Quality Improvement and Extension of Peruvian Education'. The latter were similar in spirit but went far beyond the previous reform attempt. The norms created the *Communal Education Councils (COMUNED)* which would administer schools. This initiative was accompanied by a municipalized funding system based on the Chilean voucher model – which funded schools on the basis of the number of pupils and promoted parental choice in school selection.

⁷⁸ The chronology of reforms carried out during the nineties is mainly based on Du Bois (2004). The present analysis, however, adds to Du Bois' chronology as it goes beyond a focus on institutional reforms and considers also the efforts to reform curriculum and pedagogy.

⁷⁹ 'D.L.' Stands for *Decreto Legislativo*, i.e. legal decree

As with the previous attempt, the latter reforms gave rise to very strong opposition – even, as Du Bois (2004) points out, from those who were supposed to be its main beneficiaries (i.e. parents). Criticisms were mainly directed at the idea of municipalizing education, which was seen as a move towards privatization and to the state's relinquishing of its main role as provider of educational services. The opposition also criticised the idea of profit-making in schools which was introduced by the norms, and which changed the traditional status of educational organisations as being non-for-profit – this move, it was argued, would turn schools into 'educational businesses'.

As in the case of the previous reforms, and in spite of the government's majority in Congress which did allow it to get the legal norms approved, the government ended up taking a step back *vis a vis* the opposition. According to Du Bois (2004) the government could not afford opposition in a context that was already socially and politically tense after Fujimori's *auto-coup*. In 1993, Fujimori himself announced that he had 'changed his mind' about the reforms, and both the Prime Minister and the Education Minister, Alberto Varillas, were dismissed from their posts.

10.2.2 Emphasis on Infrastructure (1994 onwards)

After the failure of these first reform attempts the focus of educational investment was set on infrastructure. According to one interviewee, *'that was almost a personal view of president Fujimori, because he said, according to the people who were close to him and who told us, that investment projects are actually only visible in time when they have an infrastructure component'* (CASE 03 – former head of ministerial office). This emphasis on infrastructure has also been associated with the president's electoral aims, as new schools bore the colours and slogans of the government's party. As Du Bois (2004) reports, this emphasis on infrastructure led to the development of the National Institute for Educational and Health Infrastructure (INFES) was created, which, together with other institutions like the National Fund for Compensation and Development (FONCODES), the Transitory Regional Administration Committees (CTAR) and the Ministry of Education's Educational Infrastructure Office (OINFE), as in charge of building and refurbishing schools all around the country. The emphasis on infrastructure lasted all throughout Fujimori's government, leading to an increase in the number of primary and secondary schools from 37,938 in 1990 to 42,653 in 1997, and then to 44,107 in 2002 (Diaz quoted in Du Bois 2004).

10.2.3 MECEP and the Proposed New Structure for the Education System (1994-2000)

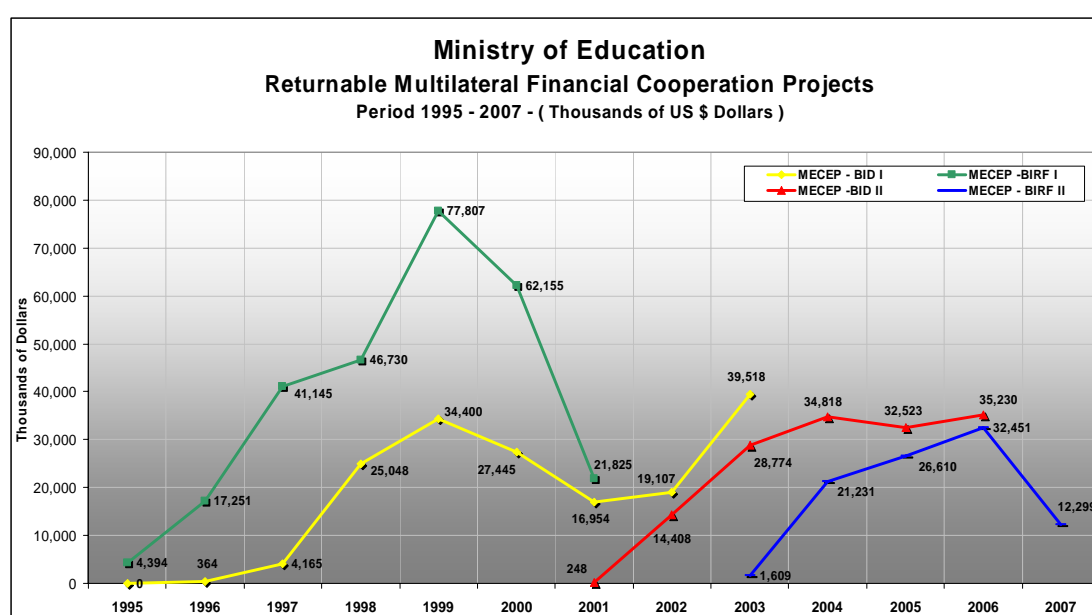
Although between 1993 and 1994 the major administrative reforms of the education system had been discontinued, these years saw an important effort to develop a more comprehensive reform strategy. In 1993 UNESCO, together with other organizations like the World Bank and GTZ, funded a series of studies that led to the publication of a *General Diagnosis of Peruvian Education (Ministry of Education of Peru 1993)*, which would be the basis for an educational development plan. The Diagnosis' main conclusions were that:

- there was a lack of a national educational project capable of guiding the actions of different agents.
- there was considerable lack of investment in the education sector.
- there was a rigid bureaucracy and an excess and superposition of norms and regulations that made the administration very inefficient.
- the basic education curriculum was inadequate, being based on rote learning and without much articulation between subjects.
- there was a lack of adequate educational materials.
- school infrastructure was insufficient and inadequate.

The Diagnosis led to the establishment, in 1994, of the Primary Education Quality Improvement Project, which was largely funded with a World Bank Loan. The Project tackled many of the problems identified in the Diagnosis, and although it initially focused on Primary Education, it later incorporated moneys from other sources (mainly the InterAmerican Development Bank – IDB), changing its name to Peruvian Education Quality Improvement Programme. MECEP aimed to tackle a series of areas considered crucial for the improvement of Primary education, and the education system more generally.

The MECEP loan was agreed in 1994 and the project officially began in 1995, but it was only in 1996 that investment in educational reforms started to rise. Between

1994 and 1996 constant changes in the Ministry of Education's authorities added to the usual length of project negotiations and delayed programme spending. In 1996, according to one interviewee, such delays and the MED's incapacity to come out with a coherent set of proposals to achieve the project's main objectives led the World Bank - allegedly concerned with the low rate of expenditure - to threaten with cutting the Programme. The graph below illustrates the trends in multilateral financial cooperation and shows the increase in investment through loan funds since 1995, and particularly after 1996.



Source: Ministry of Education of Peru *

Domingo Palermo was appointed minister in 1996, and according to his own account, he was called upon by Fujimori with the express mission of remedying the delays in the implementation of MECEP and putting an end to the discontinuities brought about by the succession of ministers who had preceded him. Palermo managed to negotiate an extension with the World Bank and finally came out with a project proposal that accelerated the implementation of reform policies (as seen in the graph above)

* The graph shows investment with moneys from the two main funding sources, the World Bank (MECEP-IDB) and the InterAmerican Development Bank (MECEP-BIRF), in both cases the loan programmes had two stages, thus the four lines in the graph.

In 1997, the MED's Strategic Planning Office published what could be described as the framework for the reforms that were being set in motion through MECEP. This proposal contrasted with those of the early decade as it focused on changes in the education system's structure, and on the pedagogical and curricular aspects of education, rather than on institutional reforms.

Since the first reform attempts, and although some moves were made to increase school autonomy, there was little advancement in terms of institutional reforms. Palermo's predecessor in the MED had managed to get a series of norms for the *management and development of activities in schools and education programmes* (DL. 016) approved by Congress in 1996. The latter, as in the case of the early reforms, aimed at modernising the system's management by transferring pedagogical, administrative and financial responsibilities to schools. Amongst other things, the norms allowed school head-teachers to carry out activities within the school premises to raise money that could then be used by the school for infrastructure improvements and developing special programmes. As Du Bois (Du Bois 2004) shows, however, there was little advancement in relation to this new normativity. The intermediate administrative organs of the MED kept on acting 'in a spirit contrary to the norm', while head-teachers went on having 'limited capacities to select or evaluate school personnel', and had no influence over the school budget. In this case, Du Bois suggests, it was mainly the 'central and intermediate levels' resistance to losing power' and an extensive and cryptic legislation what hindered the reform.

The other major effort in terms of the promotion of changes in the legal framework came during this period came through the approval of the DL. 882 for *Promoting Private Investment in Education*. The latter proposal, which was concomitant with the government's conviction that there needed be more participation from the private sector in the provision of educational services, led to a massive increase in the number of private schools, higher education institutes and universities. The number of private schools increased from 5,506 in 1990 to 14,655 in 2002 (Du Bois 2004), but still the public sector covers 85 percent of the whole education supply. As some critics suggest, this de-regulation of the system was not accompanied by adequate monitoring and regulation, which meant that the quality of many of the new educational institutions that came to being after the norm was passed is questionable.

Once the MECEP programme was set in motion its main objectives were to improve problems in teaching quality - through curricular reform, production of school

materials and teacher training; modernising educational administration - by strengthening planning and monitoring capacities at the central administrative level and providing management training at the intermediate and school levels; and replacing and rehabilitating educational infrastructure. The project was thus divided into three main components, each for one of the objectives, which were incorporated into the MED's organic structure and became the main activities of most of the MED's Offices (Du Bois 2004). Later loan agreements with the InterAmerican Development Bank increased MECEP's scope of action to include policies at the secondary and post-secondary education levels.

In 1997 the MED came out with a Proposal for a New Structure of the Education System (Ministry of Education - Peru 1997), which would serve as the basic framework for the reforms carried out through MECEP and other MED's offices. The latter proposed:

- Universalising pre-school education for five-year-olds, in order to prevent children from lagging behind, repeating school years and leaving school
- Improving the quality of Primary Education, consolidating the changes promoted by MECEP
- Reducing Secondary Schooling from five to four years, and
- Introducing a new non-compulsory post-secondary level, the Bachillerato, which aimed to improve the articulation between school and higher education and the labour market.

More substantially, the reforms proposed in the context of the MECEP programme aimed at generating changes in school practices, which were seen as the core of quality and student achievement problems. Such changes were promoted through comprehensive curricular reform, as well as through teacher training and the introduction of school materials and technologies. The aim was to promote a thorough transformation of the education system, which entailed a shift from a vertical, rote memory and teacher-centred pedagogy which was, moreover, based on an obsolete and extremely prescriptive curriculum, to a pupil-centred pedagogy in which teachers were seen as facilitators of learning processes, and where the curriculum was a basic structure that should be adapted to school and classroom needs. These changes would be achieved by the introduction of a new national curriculum which would guide not only classroom practices but also teacher training

processes and the production of new school materials. The MED initially worked on the new curriculum for primary education which began to be implemented during the first years of MECEP, and then went on to prepare the curriculum for Secondary education and the Bachillerato.

As Ferrer (2004) details the MED's new curriculum proposal followed regional trends which focused on developing students' competencies, rather than on curricular objectives, and which, contrary to the latter have a more holistic approach to individual development, in which students participate actively and constructively in the world and in their social milieu. This view of learning entails, among other things, a new emphasis on meaningful learning, rather than on memorising an encyclopaedic list of contents –as was the case of the old curriculum.

Although some similarities can be identified between this curricular reforms and those of countries such as the United Kingdom – where a central curriculum and standards have been introduced in recent years – it should be stressed that the starting point of for such reforms are very different in these countries. In the case of Peru, the new curriculum entailed a flexibilisation and an increase in school and teacher autonomy – rather than an increased rigidity and centralisation of control as in the UK. On the other hand, the introduction of standards and centralised assessments came in a context in which there was virtually no measure of student performance and achievement, and is therefore a fundamental move towards improving support for schools.

The early start of curricular reform for the Primary education level, together with what some describe as a lesser degree of complexity in the definition of the curriculum for Primary education, allowed for changes in this level to achieve a degree of consolidation. As will be seen later, this was not the case of the Secondary education curricular reform, which experienced a great deal of difficulties and discontinuities.

10.2.4 The final years of Fujimori's administration

In 1999, when the reform projects were at their peak (as seen for instance in the investment graph above), Palermo was replaced by a new minister, Felipe Ignacio Garcia-Escudero. This change took place at a time when Fujimori had decided to run for a third election –which breached the constitutional mandate that presidents can only be re-elected once. According to many interviewees, Palermo's replacement with Garcia-Escudero responded to Fujimori's political aims, and entailed a shift in the concerns of the MED, from the reform policies to contributing to Fujimori's re-

election. It is even argued that the new minister was appointed as part of a political alliance that would grant support for Fujimori's re-election. According to some interviewees, Garcia-Escudero's appointment was the beginning of a series of changes in relation to the reform programme, as *'the re-election campaign began, they all forgot about the education policies, of the sense that those education policies had. There's no transference of ideas at that moment'* (CASE 08 – Former Ministry of Education official).

The following minister, Federico Salas, who was appointed once Fujimori was re-elected did not have much time in office before the collapse of the government, when evidence of deep corruption levels became public.

Reflecting on the education reforms of the 90s, Arregui (2000) argues that the major achievement was probably the development of a widespread view and shared discourse about the need to improve the quality of education. The author stresses, however, that most of the programmes and activities initiated during the decade have experienced strong difficulties which can be initially explained by the 'acute economic crisis, the internal war and the deep impoverishment of public institutions which were experienced during the eighties', the effect of which continued to be felt in the 90's. However, according to Arregui (2000), such problems are also associated with 'the lack of a qualified bureaucracy in the Ministry of Education and instability in its leadership, plus 'a national political process and a presidential politics that gave priority to issues of the moment and electoral considerations rather than to more coherent development policies'. As a consequence, there is a general 'lack of definition as to what role should be played by the State in the preparation and implementation of educational policies'. This is the context in which the transition government that replaced Fujimori came into power.

The result of this is that much of the diagnosis done in the early nineties is still applicable at the turn of the millennium, that is, there are still major problems in the quality of education, which relate to institutional, pedagogical and financial issues.

10.3 THE TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY

The transition government that took over after Fujimori fled the country had the difficult mission of preparing a new election and re-establishing the political order for the transition to democracy. In terms of education policies, most interviewees agree

that the administration of Marcial Rubio did not do much in terms of introducing new policies, its main aim being to administer the transition process. Some of the teams that had worked in the Reform Programme of the previous government remained in office, so this gave some continuity to reforms after the parenthesis of Garcia-Escudero. The main contribution of Rubio's administration was the National Consultation for Education and publishing an institutional Memoir that presented the MED's main lines of action, and which would help to guarantee some degree of continuity once the new government came into place (Ministry of Education of Peru 2001).

10.4 EDUCATION POLICIES IN THE GOVERNMENT OF ALEJANDRO TOLEDO

The 2001 election saw Alejandro Toledo achieve the presidency, and Nicolas Lynch become minister of education of the new government. The first of Toledo's cabinets was diverse and included individuals from very different backgrounds – right-wing, centre-left, left-wing. This was seen as a move to achieve legitimacy and support for government action from a broad range of political groups.

Although the Transition Government was evidently critical of the corruption levels of Fujimori's government and had emphasised the need to establish more transparent and democratic administrative processes, it had also attempted to give some continuity to the policies initiated during the time of Fujimori. In contrast, Lynch highlighted the lack of legitimacy of Fujimori's government and used this as a political justification to put an end to many of the reforms that were in motion.

At the administrative level, for instance, Lynch's administration put an end to the MECEP programme, arguing that it had created a parallel system that did not contribute to the long-lasting improvement of the MED's competencies. In relation to the more substantive reforms, the new administration decided to stop the Bachillerato programme and go back to the structure as it was previous to the 1997 proposal (Ministry of Education - Peru 1997). This also meant that the secondary education curriculum was modified, as it now had to cover five years, rather than the four years of the 'Proposed Structure'. Lynch's administration also got rid of many Heads of Office who had remained in their posts during the Transition Government.

In January 2002, Lynch's administration published a document named 'Education for Democracy' (Ministry of Education of Peru 2002) which presented the educational

plan for the 2001-2006 period. As the title suggested, the document emphasised the need to democratise both educational administration and educational process, as well as the need to promote democratic values in all levels of the education system. Lynch's administration also saw the beginning of the National Council for Education, the New Law of Education and was responsible for publishing the results of the National Consultation for Education carried out by the Transition Government.

Eleven months after being appointed, however, Lynch was dismissed from his post during the first of Toledo's major governmental crises. The latter gave way to a recomposition of the Cabinet, which came to be composed mainly by partisans of Toledo's political party – *Peru Posible*. Gerardo Ayzanoa, a close collaborator of Toledo, was appointed Minister of Education. Although Ayzanoa had been one of Lynch's vice-ministers, he halted the major programmes that his predecessor had set in motion. Ayzanoa did not produce another reform proposal, but he implemented major changes in several areas, particularly in Secondary Education, where his advisors questioned and changed the curricular reform that was proposed by Lynch's team.

Ayzanoa's policies were severely questioned by the education community, especially by the newly formed National Council for Education (Lauer 2002; Rivero 2003). The minister was also highly criticised for the way he dealt with the 2002 teacher's strike, which led to the signing of an agreement in which, analysts suggested, the MED agreed to a kind of co-government of education with the teacher's Union, and relinquished the possibility of implementing changes to the teacher's law.

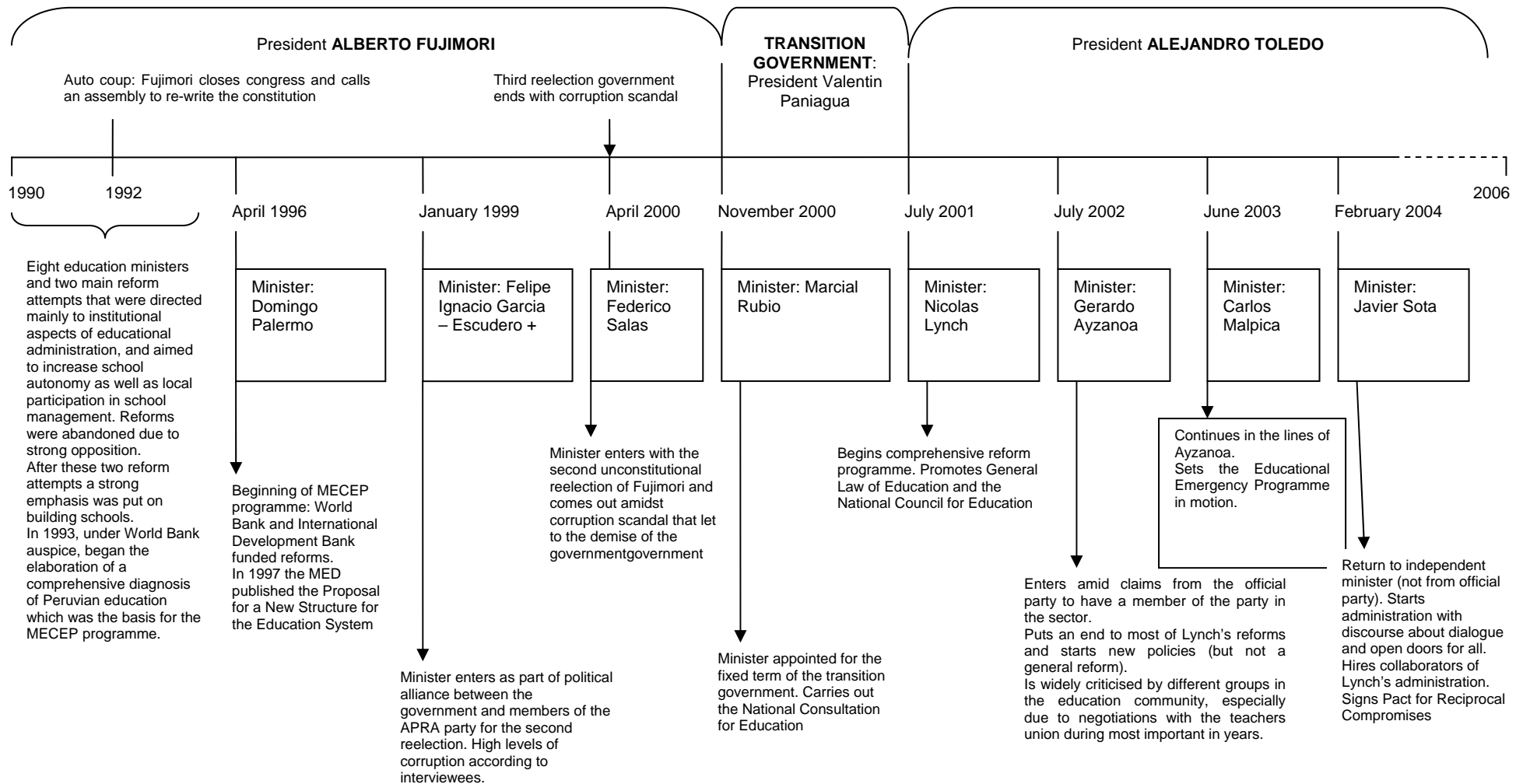
Ayzanoa's administration did not last long. The whole of the second cabinet was modified in the second major crisis of Toledo's government. The new cabinet was one of conciliation and was led by an independent prime minister with ample experience in public administration, who emphasised the application of technical criteria for decision-making. In education, the new appointed minister was Carlos Malpica.

Malpica, who was close to Ayzanoa, did not implement any major changes in policy. One of his main 'achievements' was to declare an Educational Emergency Programme, which came after Peru's low performance in the OECD-PISA evaluation was made public. During his time in Office, Malpica, as he himself expressed in an interview, was more concerned with promoting a major fiscal reform that would bring more funds to the education sector. Before this reform was achieved, however, both

Malpica and the head of cabinet were dismissed and a new cabinet was formed. This time, Javier Sota was appointed minister.

Sota assumed office with a conciliatory discourse that emphasised openness all sectors. This was his approach, particularly, to negotiations with the Teachers Union, which had been the source of conflict in the preceding years. Sota called upon some of Lynch's collaborators, so it is assumed that some of his policies would follow the directions established by Lynch's reform proposal. One of Sota's major contributions has been to sign a Social Pact of Reciprocal Compromises (Foro del Acuerdo Nacional 2004), in which the government pledges to increase teachers' salaries as well as the general budget for education, while the teachers' pledge to engage in serious reforms. The following table illustrates the chronology of reforms.

GOVERNMENTS, MINISTERS AND EDUCATION REFORMS (1990-2004)



10.5 NO POLICY CORE? – AN ANALYSIS OF REFORMS

This chronology of reforms conveys a strong sense of the discontinuities that have affected education policies since the early nineties. For methodological reasons the account offered focuses only on the period between 1990 and 2004. If one were to look back, however, the presence of fundamental discontinuities would still be a constant feature of education policies.

In a case study of the 1970's education reform that the military government of President Velasco promoted in Peru, for instance, Haddad (1994) portrays a picture of education policy-making that bears strong similarities to the events that have taken place in Peru in recent years. Such similarities are not to do with the content and aims of the reforms, but with what Haddad describes as 'the dynamics of education policymaking'. As happened in the change from Fujimori's to Toledo's government, at the end of the 1970's, the transition into democracy after a decade of military rule, led to the disarticulation of a reform programme, which has often been praised in retrospect for its high level of articulation and appropriateness to Peruvian reality. Although differences between the two cases are evident, both in terms of the ideological and theoretical framework of the reforms, as in their aims and contents, the similarities in terms of how the reforms were handled are undeniable. That this was so was also suggested by some of the interviewees:

That reform [Velasco's], was progressively dismantled up to a point when there was a complete distortion, in the 80's, when the country regained democracy with Belaunde, and the parliament, rather than attempt to rescue some positive elements of that educational change, decided to erase everything and start anew... after having reached a well achieved basic education level. This generated a very strange, very traditional, situation. (CASE 07 – Former ministerial adviser and member of the National Council for Education)

... something must be really wrong in the system that never allows us to build the second floor, never. Belaunde [in the early 60's] comes in saying that Prado did everything wrong, and then comes Velasco and says that Belaunde did everything wrong, and so on. In all governments there's a need to start anew in... in the foundations that had been laid. (CASE 08 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

In the second extract the idea of 'starting anew' in the 'foundations' of policies is especially important. Here it may be relevant to bring back Majone's (1989)

adaptation to policy-making of Lakatos' ideas, which suggests that policies tend to have a core, usually theoretical or ideological, that provides a sense of continuity to policies, and which is surrounded by a series of 'protective belts' that can change over time but which, on the whole, help maintain the core. The interviewee's reflections suggest, as does the chronology of events presented above, that in Peru, the core that makes sense of education policies has changed continuously. Discontinuity has thus been radical, and not only the outcome of the normal flux that the 'protective belts' are in. It would seem that a core has never been formed, ideas have never fully consolidated. This is, according to Majone, an important difference to bear in mind. Policy cores can change in time due to crises – which can be induced by criticism or can come through the incremental loss of the core's explanatory and creative capacity. But it can also be the case that cores never form. Each situation is indicative of different problems.

In the Peruvian case, the lack of consolidation of a policy core appears to be related to the role that education has in the Peruvian state. The high levels of social inequality that have prevailed in the country throughout the process of post-colonial state development help explain the early portrayal that was offered of public education as an 'education for the poor'. This, as will be discussed in the following pages, helps explain the lack of a better or stronger commitment towards the improvement of public education services. In a country in which, as seen in previous chapters, national development has generally been based, albeit tacitly, on a high level of exclusion for a vast majority of the population, thinking seriously about educational reform seems out of the question. Educational discourses can therefore be constantly reshuffled to express the personal views of policy makers, who sometimes are more concerned with their positional advancement within the field of education policy (Ladwig 1994), than with promoting a more coherent set of educational policies.

The extent to which this trend has strengthened due to the prevalence of a Neo Liberal economic and political model that doubts the role of the state in national development is something to have in mind. But such associations need to be handled with care since, as the chronology evidences, there is no clear cut ideology running through the reforms of the period under study. The first decade of Fujimori's government could be associated with the prevalence of Neo Liberal trends in education, as reforms –which, however, were never implemented – aimed at market

oriented decentralisation⁸⁰. But while these trends were consolidated in the economic sphere, opposition faced in the sphere of education led to the development of varied policy frameworks that cannot be entirely associated with the prevalence of Neo Liberalism. As was shown, during the second half of the nineties the emphasis on decentralisation and school autonomy decreased, extending only to the transference of very reduced responsibilities to schools and the emphasis on school involvement in the determination of curricular activities. At the same time, the centrepiece of reforms was curriculum and pedagogical change, that is, a concern with educational processes which are not typically seen as part and parcel of the Neo Liberal agenda in education. This was combined with more openly liberalising policies, such as those promoting private investment in education (e.g. the 882 decree). But the prevalence of a specific reform direction inspired by Neo Liberal ideals is difficult to identify (see Narodowski and Nores 2003).

Following this mixed trend in the application of reforms during the nineties, the change of government amid deep political turmoil set the focus of education and other reforms on the need to democratise politics and policy making. New trends in decentralisation – such as those promoted in the 2003 Law of Education - are based on a discourse against deep and entrenched corruption in the central government, and an emphasis on community participation rather than choice.

The identity of education reforms is thus varied enough to require a more complex critique than the one which assumes the prevalence of a single theme within the multiplicity of reform and policy initiatives. The lack of coherence of reforms seems to show, however, that in Peruvian education, rather than more policies, what is required is a new political economy capable of guiding reforms and policies in desired directions, and of taking more seriously the reduction of social inequalities. These ideas will be discussed in the next chapter. For now, let us go into the interview data.

⁸⁰ For a thorough discussion of the characteristics of neoliberal policies in education and their spread throughout the Latin American region see Ball et al. (2003), especially Narodowski's and Nores' (2003) chapter, which discusses the variety and extent of the application of neoliberal policies in education.

CHAPTER 11 - THE INSTITUTIONAL MATRIX OF POLICY MAKING (THEMATIC ANALYSIS)

The interviews focus extensively on the institutional context in which education policy making takes place and on the ensuing characteristics of the policy process. The portrayal interviewees offer matches characterisations of Latin American states which link institutional weakness to social and political developments in the region (O'Donnell 2002; 1998). Kobrin (1977), for instance, suggests that institutional weakness is the outcome of having imported modern governmental institutions, rather than the latter having emerged from changes at the social and civil level. Drawing on the interview data, the following pages will deal extensively with the institutional matrix in which education policy making takes place in Peru.

The concept of institutions is being used in a broad sense, to refer to 'the rules of the game in a society' or, in other words, to the formal and informal 'humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction' (North 1990: 3). Institutions, in this perspective, constitute 'the framework within which human interaction takes place' (North 1990: 4). As O'Donnell (1994) defines them, institutions are 'regularized patterns of interaction that are known, practiced, and regularly accepted (if not necessarily normatively approved) by social agents who expect to continue interacting under the rules and norms formally or informally embodied in those processes' (p.57). Institutions can 'Sometimes, but not necessarily (...) become formal organizations: they materialize in buildings, seals, rituals, and persons in roles that authorize them to "speak" for the organization' (O'Donnell 1994:57).

In the present study, the focus is on the patterns of interaction related to the policy making process in education. The aim of the analysis presented in the following pages is to identify those patterns in order to understand the rules of the education policy making game. A central aspect of this on which the analysis focuses is the education process machinery or bureaucracy. Interviewees have pointed to limitations of the current bureaucratic organisation, seen, for instance, in the lack of a civil service career, which allows the employment of unqualified officials to the Ministry of Education, and which generally offers no clear mechanisms for advancement or change among public servants. The lack of formal procedures for appointing or firing officials not only weakens the legitimacy of appointed officials. It also seems to lead to the prevalence of other regularised patterns of interaction such as clientelism, given that there are no clear rules for advancement in the career ladder. Interviewees have also discussed the influence of politics over policy making,

the lack of clear procedures for the introduction, discussion, implementation and assessment of policies, and the processes through which new policies are generally introduced. The following interview extract illustrates some of the points that will be analysed in the next pages:

The issue is one of poverty. But this poverty is an institutional poverty, what has been described as Peru's low institutional density. So our space, which should be saturated by institutions, is not, it is institutionally shallow. In this poor space, what we've got is a poor education, but poor not only in economic terms, but poor in conceptual terms, poor in terms of content, poor in terms of perception... the air is thin. Now, since the air is thin, there's a kind of continuous need for more air, you're all the time saying where, where, where, what can I get, what can I do, what do I change, what do I move. So there's an effervescence in terms of looking for changes, which is a bit blind and a bit crazy. That's the origin of discontinuity. (CASE 16 – Former ministerial adviser)

This institutional poverty sets the framework for policy making in education, and generally weakens policies, as it allows for and promotes constant changes, and fails to provide a pool of resources from which policy makers can draw to carry out policies and reforms. The picture that emerges from these reflections offers an important entry point for understanding the problem of policy discontinuity. It is a portrayal of the institutional context in which education policy making takes place, of the rules that guide, limit or make possible the actions of policy makers. This section thus paves the way for an exploration of how individual agents, policy makers in this case, operate within existing institutional arrangements, how they overcome or help reproduce the existing limitations – an exploration that will be presented in the next section on policy narratives.

11.1 THE PROCESS MACHINERY FOR THE MAKING OF EDUCATION POLICIES

Some of the most serious difficulties to policy making in education seem to stem from the characteristics of the bureaucracy. The lack of a civil service career hinders the formation of a more stable administrative system which might help ensure a fundamental degree of continuity in policies. Ministerial teams change continuously, thus impeding the formation of an institutional memory and hindering a learning process which might guarantee some degree of incremental change. The lack of

clear criteria for entering or leaving the education administrative system, leads to the prevalence of clientelistic mechanisms which make the existing bureaucracy one of temporary pacts and alliances – a situation that strongly contributes to the radical discontinuity of education policies.

Interviewee's reflections on the institutional framework in which education policies are made dealt mainly with the characteristics of the education bureaucracy and the limitations that the current bureaucratic organization sets on policy making. In general, interviewees suggested that the lack of a well-established and well-organised process machinery means that policies have little institutional support and can therefore be changed according to political and personal agendas. The problems in the education bureaucracy – which extend also to other policy sectors – stem largely from the fact that Peru does not have a public service career, nor a clear set of mechanisms for entering (or leaving) the public service. In part, as interviewees suggest, this allows for the prevalence of clientelistic criteria in the selection of civil servants, and for the entrance into the Ministry of Education of individuals who sometimes lack preparation or commitment to their jobs, and who are often more concerned with the personal politics that will allow them to maintain or advance their positions than with the projects they are involved in.

11.1.1 The context

Understanding problems related to the education bureaucracy requires some consideration of the criteria by which officials, at different levels, are appointed to occupy administrative positions. Given the scope of this work, the following description will focus mainly on the appointment of officials for the central administration (i.e. the Ministry of Education), which is in charge of defining policies and ensuring their implementation. An idea of the problems faced in the bureaucracy is obtained precisely when considering the variety of mechanisms through which officials are appointed.

The original structure for the appointment of administrative officials that existed before the structural reforms of the early nineties followed a common career ladder pattern. In the latter, teachers could progress until they sometimes reached administrative positions, generally at the meso-level of regional and local administration. Progress in the career ladder could also lead teachers to occupy positions in the central administration, particularly in middle and lower ranks. Although they were not specifically qualified for policy making, reaching policy

making positions was one of the best possible rewards in the teaching career. Appointed officials, like the rest of public servants, had job security. Although to some extent such a career ladder existed, the mechanisms for promotion were not so clear. Although officially based on formal criteria, the system was (and still is) permeated by clientelistic relations, which are often the basis for the selection of officials. To this we have to add the considerable expansion, that the educational administration, like all of the public sector, underwent since the 1970's, and which rendered the system highly inefficient (World Bank 1994).

Since the early 1990's, however, with the beginning of Fujimori's government, there was an explicit attempt to reform public administration, which was part of the structural reform package that was being applied. Many of the reforms that were carried out were promoted by institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF, and were explicitly aimed at assigning the state a subsidiary role in national development, in the expectation that this would make it more efficient (see: World Bank 1994). In the MED, this meant massive reductions in the number of officials, made possible through changes in labour laws, which created flexible employment by eliminating work security, and through the introduction of redundancy packages for existing public servants. A small number of public servants refused to accept these packages and remained in the MED, but the overall administration was radically changed.

The discourse of Fujimori's government focused on 'modernisation' and technical decision-making, and although this remained so for the ten years of government, the discourse was undermined in practice by rampant corruption, which interfered with the aims of policies and reforms. These were, however, the principles that guided the re-development of the MED, in which, according to some interviewees there was an explicit attempt to build a 'technocracy'. The new administration incorporated many officials with a managerial background – including a minister – who were radically different from the traditional public servants. In most cases, these new 'technical' teams coexisted with members of the 'old bureaucracy', and, as will be seen, the differences between them were often a source of tension.

After the reforms implemented by Fujimori's government there are two main categories of administrative officials in the MED. Those who are part of the MED's payroll and have longer term contracts, and those who work under short term contracts. The former are generally in the lower levels of the administration. Above them are the heads of office and other mid-rank officials who tend to work on short-term contracts. Those who are part of the MED's payroll constitute the more stable ministerial bureaucracy, but occupy positions of reduced responsibility, particularly in

relation to the definition and implementation of policies. Officials on short-term contracts tend to be specialists in educational issues who are in charge of conceptualising and developing policies. During the time of Fujimori, differences between these two types of administrative personnel were accentuated given that the salaries of officials who were part of the MED's payroll came from the national budget, and were comparatively low to those of the specialists under contract, who were paid with money from international loans – such differences were justified because the low national salaries did not allow hiring qualified officials with the necessary technical skills. As will be seen below through some interview extracts, the extent to which this allowed for a real institutional strengthening (which was a central aim of the projects funded with international loans) is questionable, but the possibility of carrying out a reform without a higher paid technocracy also raises many questions.

11.1.2 A feudal bureaucracy?

... this is a country where the income curve can be associated with the curve of developed/acquired skills, capacities. We're very unequal as a country, so the problem we have is that cycles take place when a group of the people which have the most capacity arrives, but they're not the bureaucrats. What happens when... when they leave what remains is the wasteland of the bureaucracy. Our bureaucracy is not an elitist bureaucracy, an elite, it's a bureaucracy of pacts... but it's not like you have much to choose from... If we had a bigger middle class, a better middle class... but we have devoted to wipe ourselves out. There's an issue there, an issue of how much stability can policies based on such a flat income structure have. (CASE 08 - Former Ministry of Education Official).

The extract above illustrates some of the fundamental problems in the area of public administration which affect education policy making and the possible consolidation of policies. Firstly, the image of the bureaucracy as one of pacts suggests that policies are made in the context of temporal alliances that might change or come apart according to political movements. The idea of a bureaucracy of pacts indicates the prevalence of clientelistic and patronage relations, where personal loyalties take precedence over more democratic and transparent decision-making criteria, and where the appointment of officials responds largely to political considerations, rather than to principles of merit and competition.

The extract also supports the idea, discussed above, that the central bureaucracy of the MED is split into two levels, that of more stable, but sometimes less qualified, civil servants, and that of the experts, who are generally in charge of promoting reforms and new policies, but which change continuously.

Finally, the extract also indicates that there clearly are wider structural issues related to the characteristics of the bureaucracy and that problems stem not only from the lack of more transparent career and accountability mechanisms. What the interviewee suggests is that the lack of a well-prepared bureaucracy is a consequence of the country's polarised income structure, which does not offer a good source of well-qualified middle rank officials. This, according to the interviewee, creates a situation in which those with a good level of technical capacity tend to be in the less stable ranks of the MED, working under short term contracts and prone to being replaced when the higher levels (ministers, vice ministers) change –something that, as has been already shown, takes place at rather frequent intervals.

The issues that the extract raises appear throughout most of the interviews with individuals who have had direct participation in the central administration:

If there's something I learned there [in the MED] is the need to promote the public career. Because, look, [people] came to me and told me 'this one's Fujimorist, sack him', and I said no, I won't sack him for being Fujimorist, because he's the MED's hard drive. So, how do we protect those hard drives? It's only through a public career. So that you can change viceministers and ministers a hundred times if you want, but [in such a way] that they don't have the power to change those people. That's fundamental, because that gives you continuity (CASE 11 – Former vice-minister of education.).

This description suggests that political criteria, which in most democracies are limited to the selection of the higher ranks of policy sectors, are here extended to the selection of middle ranks, and this substantially hinders continuity. This trend was particularly strong in the transition between Fujimori's and Toledo's governments, due to the shift from authoritarianism and corruption to democracy. Most importantly, however, is the interviewee's reflection on how such changes undermine the MED's institutional memory and thus the continuity of reforms. Another interviewee pointed in a similar direction:

... the MED is in an unfortunate situation. I don't know about other sectors, but it is indicative of the fragility of the state. Over here there's no civil service, so there's no teams that prepare to take over the MED's direction. There's no schools where teams for the MED get prepared. And besides, instead of being a space that gathers the best professionals in the country, because supposedly the MED has the leadership in education it's an employment centre to which people get through friendship, sympathy, political recommendations, through political pressures. And it's difficult to direct things from an organisation with such a professional composition. (CASE 15 – Fomer Ministry of Education Official)

Looking more into the way in which these issues affect the policy process, one interviewee suggested that:

The concept of 'feud' still prevails when one looks at the way in which things are done in the MED, and I say this because I've often used it.

The problem with the MED's 'feudal' organisation is not necessarily that there's certain attributes of authority that have to be respected. One problem is, for instance, that the higher spheres supported a discourse that could be resisted below, which is actually a violation of the feudal laws.

[In another case], the feudal power of the primary education office [for instance] wanted to subordinate the feudal power of the teacher training office to make it work under it's own ideas and conceptions. (CASE 18 - Former Ministry of Education Official)

This extract opens a different, although related line of analysis, which suggests that as a consequence of the social organisation through which officials are recruited to the MED, the way in which the central administration operates is also caught up in a highly politicised logic where there is a prevalence of patronage criteria for the appointment of personnel – a trend identified by Grindle (2004) for the whole of the region. When read in relation to Ladwig's (1994) ideas on the possibility of analysing policy decisions as the outcome of social relations within the field of education policy, the idea of the MED being organised according to a 'feudal' pattern opens very relevant lines of analysis that can help understand the problem of policy discontinuity. In the feudal model, the actions of groups and individuals often respond to criteria that differ radically from concerns with outcomes. It is the competition for favours, or the struggles between 'feudal' groups that determines

decisions. In this sense, policy actions can be read 'as strategies by which players defend or advance their positions [within the field of education policy]', where the 'stances educational policy players take... are related to the player's position within the field of education policy' (Ladwig 1994: 345), rather than to concerns with the application of relevant policies.

Although a closer analysis of what goes on in other instances of the policy making process goes beyond the scope of the present study, it is relevant to note that according to some interviewees, similar problems of politicisation, clientelism and corruption seem to take place in other levels of the educational bureaucracy.

80percent of the budget is administered in the regions. But in the regions there are very serious problems, of corruption, very high, very high. And when contracts and the official appointments existed it was worse, because each appointment was negotiated. Then there's quality problems with the personnel that's there [in the regions]. I mean, there's no teams... in the rest of the country the teams that are in the education system are very very bad. So you have those problems. You can decide whatever you want over here, but those people don't have the capacity to implement anything. That's what worries me about regionalization, because the transference of more responsibilities, including some pedagogical ones, is to those people [CASE 02 – Former Minister of Education].

According to this extract, the problems faced by the administration in the central level are reproduced and even intensified in the case of regional administration. This is particularly worrying at a time when so many expectations are being put over the process of decentralization, and calls for a thorough revision of the processes through which policies are made.

11.1.3 Formal limitations on policy making

Interviewees pointed to the limitations stemming from the existing legal framework, which sets a high level of 'red tape' that slows down decision making and thus hinders the consolidation of policies. The following extract illustrates this point:

Administration processes in the state are very complicated, slow and... what happens? Because of that you don't have spending capacity. And we didn't manage

to reform that. Many thousands, millions, were lost only because of that. So I think we erred in that. (CASE 11 – Former vice-minister of education)

In public administration you have to do a public contest [hire people or buy goods], publish it in the news paper, invite organisations to participate and a lot of things. What this generates... and I assure you it has been an enormous problem... [in a] a small project, of only five million dollars, more than a year had gone by and only 100thousand dollars had been spent. (CASE 03 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

The slow pace at which policies are approved and set in motion due to the complicated legal framework implies that there is little time for them to gain momentum and the possibility of achieving consolidation. More often than not, there are changes in the teams responsible for policies before the latter have been fully approved or regulated, and this makes it easier for incoming teams to change direction. The complexity of the legal framework for policy making also gives way to the influence of political interests, which can often block or slow down the approval of policies.

In the time of Fujimori when there was a higher level of continuity, that is, when the MECEP project was set in motion, such difficulties were partly bridged by establishing a parallel administrative system. The need to do so, which was criticised by the new teams that entered with Toledo's government, stemmed partly from the requirements of the international organisations that funded the project, but partly also from a concern with the possibility of carrying out the project within the State's legal framework. This is illustrated in the following comment:

If we go through the administrative side, there's a clause in the loans that demands having separate accounting and registries, and the best way to do it, in my opinion, is having a separate unit from the central administration. Because when you get resources assigned, in the schedules that come from the MEF, you get only one figure from public treasury. So the administration can decide to use those funds for one thing or another, for one programme or another. If you don't have a sufficiently strong administration, that is, with capacity to say no to certain things that the administrations in office might want, and I mean the ministers and the---, then there's a very high risk that the money which should be initially destined to investment will be destined to other things. Now, that risk hasn't been minimised, what's more, it's still

latent in the MED today, when loans aren't being used to create capacities. (CASE 03 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

According to other interviewees, this system of having two administrations did not generate capacities within the MED to appropriately run projects.

They were a group of capable professionals, they had everything from porters, chauffeurs, accountant, lawyer, all theirs. They were a kind of... I called it the colonial enclave inside of the MED. I called the banks and told them, gentlemen, I understand why this MECEP phenomenon has happened, but it has to end. Because supposedly one of the aims of the cooperation is to institutionally develop the MED. (CASE 02 – Former Minister of Education)

The problem with these decisions – i.e. that of establishing a parallel administration, and that of dissolving it - was that they both hindered institutional learning. In one case it was because the system of administration and decision making was not articulated to the more stable process machinery, and long lasting changes were therefore unlikely. In the other, because the change from the existing system was abrupt and did not take into account the limitations that had led to the establishment of such a 'solution' to existing problems.

11.1.4 Transference of ideas

The possibility of institutional learning also appears to be weakened by the processes through which ministerial authorities are changed, and which determine the degree to which ideas are transferred between one team and another. As discussed above, the lack of a more structured bureaucracy and, generally, of a 'thicker' set of institutions means that ministerial elites have almost absolute power to impose their will and views over policies. It is the ministers and their close set of advisers who define whether new policies are to be introduced and whether existing policies are to be continued or not, and, as will become clearer in the narrative analysis presented in the following section, such decisions often respond to personal views and agendas. These points are illustrated in the following extract:

I think that each new minister has the obligation, and this should be in his contract, of having meetings and interviews with previous officials and try to understand what the MED was doing when he got in. Because they come with a series of assumptions, 95percent of which, I tell you, are false assumptions about what was being done. So they introduce innovative ideas, which are part of the common sense but are creative and all, and they find that they were already being carried out. But it wasn't them who were carrying them out, which irritates them profoundly. In this context there should be a more ordered transference, but responsibility should fall on the new teams and not on the old teams. (CASE 16 – Ministry of Education Official)

The extract points to the lack of transference of ideas between ministerial teams, and also to the difficulties that the lower-rank officials experience, as they see new teams reinventing policies once and again, rather than supporting or improving existing policy lines. This tendency seems to be encouraged by the inexistence of a better structured system of party politics, which could provide a more stable source of ideas and constraints over policy makers, who would have to follow party policy lines when entering the executive. At the moment, the weak party structure, which is dominated by independent movements and alliances that form for electoral purposes, does not constitute a source of shared ideas for policy makers. This is at the root of the existence of radical discontinuities even between policy makers who, in theory, have the same party allegiances, but who, in practice, work on the basis of their own particular views of how things should be done, rather than on the basis of a shared party ideology. This also accounts for the changes of emphasis in policy lines that were shown in the chronology of policies and reforms, and which illustrates how during one same governmental period policies can change from an emphasis on choice and performance-based funding, to an emphasis on pedagogical changes or the improvement of school infrastructure, without there being a continuous line of thought permeating all levels and areas of decision-making. These points are illustrated by the following extract:

(Int.) But is there a coordination stage [between the incoming and the leaving minister]?

Very minimal, very brief.

(Int.) And do you think that would facilitate things a bit in terms of continuity?

Look, I think that'd be important the day that a party system that processes an ordered change from one government to the next in the state is established. Once

that wheel gets in motion, not in education but in all sectors, that will be useful. Meanwhile the importance of that is relative. (CASE 02 – Former Minister of Education)

The trend towards discontinuity and the lack of transference of ideas between ministerial teams is also encouraged by the existing system for appointing officials. Most interviewed ministers said they were only appointed with very short notice, and so they had to assume office without having had much time to prepare or to coordinate and discuss things with the leaving teams. Besides, there is no institutionalised process or stage for new teams to discuss things with the teams that remain in office after the higher rank officials change. Another element that adds to this is that, as seen above, the change of ministers usually occurs amidst political crises, in which governments face opposition or their legitimacy weakens, and thus attempt to regain strength by appointing figures that might elicit sympathy or convey a stronger, more efficient, image of governmental action – this has been the case particularly during the government of Toledo, but was a trend also present during the time of Fujimori, where, for instance, we saw how the appointment of minister Garcia-Escudero responded exclusively to the electoral strategy.

11.1.5 Difficulties in Inter-sectorial coordination

An issue that emerged from the interviews was that of lack of coordination between sectors in the executive, which was described as a source of difficulties and discontinuities in policy making. In particular, interviewees reflected on the limitations imposed by the Ministry of Finance, which sometimes limits the MED's scope for action. The following is particularly illustrative of this:

I think that in that sense the National Council for Education has a clear notion that the MED isn't really the main political actor, not for teachers' policies nor to get a better budget for the sector, or for any of the important issues.

(Int.) It is not, how come?

Because the MED hasn't got much capacity to decide about the fundamental things, that is, about [budgetary] resources, about priorities, about the possibility to develop certain actions together with other sectors.

(Int.) However [the MED] does have the capacity to say ‘we’re not doing this and we’re doing that’?

One could see it that way. Or you could understand that when the Ministry of Education does that it is actually because there’s someone else that is telling it that it cannot do anything else. When the MED signs the 40 points with the Teachers’ Union, and then doesn’t comply with them, it’s not so much because the MED doesn’t want to comply, but because those [agreements] in which there are resources involved, the MEF tells it that it won’t give it the money, or it tells [the MED] that it has to take that out from its own budget]. (case 13 – Member of the National Council of Education)

The extracts suggest that the MED and the MEF operate according to different and often contradictory assumptions, and that when conflict emerges in relation to specific issues, the MEF tends to impose itself. This view is also endorsed by another interviewee according to whom:

At the end of the day, when the [national] budget is discussed, for instance, the budget’s ugly duckling is the education sector, isn’t it? Because the minister of finance, I don’t know whom he listens to. I get the impression that he doesn’t listen to president Toledo, but that he listens to the recommendations of international organisations like the World Bank and the IMF, and that’s what prevails in the long term. (CASE 17 – Member of the Teachers’ Union)

In the future it would be useful to analyse the discourse of policy makers in the finance sector and compare it to those of the education sector, as to determine the source of conflict between the two. From some informal conversations with an official in the Ministry of Finance, for instance, I could gather that the MEF generally views problems in education in terms of inefficient spending, and even of incompetence on the part of the MED’s officials. While the MED is trying to increase the education budget to fund reforms and improvements in crucial areas such as infrastructure and teachers’ salaries, the MEF is trying to reduce spending. This might be an indicator that the influence of the economic orthodoxy associated with the World Bank and the IMF might be higher in and come through the finance sector, rather than through the education sector, and also that some of the conflicts between the two sectors might stem from differences in fundamental conceptions about the state and its role in social and national development.

Up to now we have seen some of the difficulties that current institutional arrangements set on the making of education policies due to flaws in the process machinery through which policies are made. In the previous pages I have discussed the effects that the lack of a civil service career, together with the prevalence of clientelistic mechanisms for the appointment of officials and a rigid legal framework that slows down and obstructs the policy process have on the making of education policies. As has been shown, such an institutional matrix makes the transference of ideas and any sort of institutional learning that might give more continuity to policies almost impossible. Now I want to turn on to the policy process itself. The analysis offered in the following pages will be especially concerned with the processes of policy deliberation, which as was shown in the previous chapter, are a fundamental source of strength for policies in democratic contexts (Fischer 2003).

11.2 THE FORMULATION OF EDUCATION POLICIES: DELIBERATION OR IMPOSITION?

As some policy theorists highlight (Fischer 2003; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003; Majone 1989), the processes through which policies are arrived at are as important, if not even more, than the policies themselves and the outcomes that they might yield. This appears to be particularly so in the context of democratic governments, in which open discussion of policy options and a disposition towards dialogue, deliberation and accountability are seen as crucial requirements.

Many interviewees pointed to weaknesses in the process through which policies are made in Peru. In most cases, it was suggested that policies are not based on an essential degree of consensus. A further exploration of this idea shows that the predominant attitude in policy making is alien to a deliberative disposition – this also matches the narrative analysis that is presented in the next section (Fischer 2003). This, as will be shown, weakens the legitimacy of policies and breeds discontinuity.

A first reading of the interview data shows two lines of reflection which relate, respectively, to the characteristics of policy making in Fujimori's and Toledo's governments. In relation to the former, interviewees suggest that there was a lack of disposition on the part of the government towards public deliberation and accountability in relation to policies. This, they suggest, was concomitant with

Fujimori's authoritarian government. In contrast, Toledo's government, and the victory of democracy with which it is associated, is portrayed as having brought about a stronger disposition towards dialogue. This followed a tendency already evidenced since the transition government, which was responsible for initiatives like the National Consultation for Education.

A second reading however, brings into question this rather straight forward approach and suggests that problems relate not only to regime characteristics (i.e. authoritarianism or democracy), but have to do with such things as the disposition of both governments and the education community and broader civil society towards deliberation of and compromise with policy options. In this reading, it appears that the problem is not one of consensus building, but, rather, one of the practical commitments that such consensus generate. This seems to suggest that the notion of what a consensus is must be scrutinised.

The following pages trace these two readings. A chronological analysis of the processes by which policy decisions were made that focuses on the deliberation of policies will be combined with a more reflective reading that considers the conceptions of policy making which seem to underlie the problems that interviewees point to.

11.2.1 The Fujimori Years

The following extract expresses a widespread view among education specialists and policy makers who are critical of the policies of Fujimori:

in the time of Fujimori there was no policy negotiation. But it was the time... precisely because of the weakness of human resources in the MED, in which consultants and international organisations did whatever they wanted. The IDB and the WB, the Spanish cooperation, they did and undid, the GTZ, they did whatever they wanted in the MED, that is, there was no proposal from the country. (CASE 12 – Member of the National Council of Education)

The first statement here is the most relevant. According to the interviewee 'there was no policy negotiation'. This fits the view that Fujimori's government acted unilaterally, without seeking consent from the broader civil society. This kind of attitude was largely feasible because of Fujimori's majority in parliament after 1992, which meant

that policies could be approved without the need for broad deliberation. The interviewee then goes on to suggest that this lack of deliberation entailed a great degree of slack in the policy process, which allowed for a largely unmediated influence of international agencies on the definition of policy options⁸¹.

The prevalence of this view, which suggests that there was no negotiation among the broader education community, is confirmed by an interviewee who worked in the MED during the time of Fujimori:

we did do things based on a principle of authority, not an authoritarian principle, but a principle of authority: this is the MED, the MED has certain hierarchical positions vis a vis the teachers for instance, or vis a vis curricular decisions, which is normative, and has the right to be so, and in the exercise of such rights some decisions were made. Complaints from the “civil society”, at that moment, were because they weren’t being consulted. (CASE 16 – Ministry of Education Official)

Note here, in particular, the conception of the MED as having ‘a *hierarchical position*’, which, as the interviewee suggests, entitles it to proceed not only without consultation, but without necessarily having to justify chosen courses of action⁸².

This image of lack of consultation during the time of Fujimori is tempered by other interviewees:

(interviewer) So [in the early years of Fujimori] there was a logic of trying to find some degree of consensus...?

It wasn’t a consensus in every level, for instance by opening big forums, but the fact is that the MED worked with a lot of people... including Foro, it worked with Gloria Helfer, Juan Ansion... At least we tried to find out or get some ideas about how people perceived this. (CASE 03 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

... with Fujimori’s government... I participated in an inter-agency mission that was conformed by the World Bank, UNDP, GTZ and UNESCO in 1992. It’s such a well-done diagnosis that it’s still a reference source. But more than the diagnosis itself I think that the interesting thing was the process generated by that mission, the

⁸¹ I will later discuss the role and influence of international agencies in more detail.

⁸² This contrasts strongly with Majone’s (1989) conception of policy making, in which justification of decisions plays a fundamental role in the legitimation and possible consolidation of policies.

dialogue with the civil society. (CASE 07 – Former Ministerial adviser and member of the National Council of Education)

It's very difficult to take away the pointer that says 'dictatorship' to a section of governmental action. It's not true that we didn't try to sow consensus. What's more, we have managed to, and this is documented and you can ask almost anyone, we have managed to get the people from Foro to design our things, and then they attacked them and stopped their names from being published. Why? Because they didn't want to be muddled with a pointer that said 'dictatorial'. So we have dedicated a lot of time. Could that battle be won? I'm not sure that it could have been won. Honestly, I'm not. I think we dedicated all the time we could have dedicated to that. In my view, dedicating more time to that wouldn't have rendered much more. I don't think that mistakes have to do with us not making enough efforts to persuade. As I said, we won all discussions... (CASE 08 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

These comments suggest that, at least during the first stages of planning the reforms that took place under the MECEP project, there was an explicit attempt on the part of the MED to engage in a dialogue with the education community. This idea is partly supported by available documents which evidence the participation of a variety of actors in the discussion of policy alternatives during the early nineties (Ministry of Education of Peru 1993).

The final extract is particularly illustrative of the approach to deliberation that seems to have prevailed at the time of Fujimori. The interviewee talks about '*winning battles*', an image that conveys a lack of openness to competing ideas. On the other hand, the extract also points towards the difficulties for achieving consensus in a dictatorial context, which not only blocks participation in public discussions, but supposes that there are no clear binding forces to sustain agreements.

This latter point is supported by the following interviewee, who suggests that policy deliberations did not entail a compromise on the part of the government, which was not overly concerned with the democratic legitimation of policies:

I think that work [the diagnosis that preceded the MECEP programme] was very technical, because not only were there people who knew about the subject involved, but also experts who knew about the issues were brought. Apart from this the 93 school census was done with the donation. Each group produced a report which had details on a series of activities and which prioritised what had to be done.

... at the end of all these studies there was a thing called the closure seminar, to determine policies... it was deemed necessary to work in curriculum, educational materials, teacher training, management, funding, strengthening of the MED.

That was very funny because in the closure... there was a mission and just at that point there was a change of minister. That mission imposed the issue of infrastructure, which, although it had appeared as a necessary issue, at that moment the government was very worried about having an infrastructure component.

And that was almost a personal view of president Fujimori, because he said, according to the people who were close to him and who told us, that investment projects are actually only visible in time when they have an infrastructure component.

(CASE 03 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

The interviewee suggests that an initial attitude towards open discussion and agreement of policy choices did not lead to a policy settlement, as the agreements were modified according to the president's personal and political views. This is an indication that agreements, or consensus, do not operate as binding mechanisms to guide the actions of policy makers. Without appropriate institutional constraints policy makers can dismiss agreements and change policies at will, thus generating strong discontinuities that hinder the formation and application of more coherent policies.

Once the MECEP programme began the MED's attitude towards deliberation of policy options was, according to one of the interviewees:

tense and with little dialogue.

(...) I cannot generalise in relation to academic institutions, but I think that from many of them there has been a willingness to participate

[But] the MED's practice has always been, and that's still the case, to build commissions within the Ministry [rather than promote open participation] (CASE 19 – Member of the National Council of Education).

This idea is supported by a policy maker from the time of Fujimori:

we allowed ourselves to say that we didn't want the consensus of mediocrity, that we wanted a serious discussion, then we would discuss.

(...)what we have to learn is that we mustn't dismiss anyone, we have to listen, we have to see what is going on in the scenario before making decisions, and we have to recover the things that are worthwhile (CASE 08 – Former Ministry of Education Official).

The last phrase in particular, in which the interviewee is being self-critical, implies that during the time of Fujimori there was not an attitude of open dialogue and debate of policies. Although initially this might have given the government considerable slack to go ahead with its reform programme, in the long term, this non-deliberative attitude seems to have weakened policies, as the lack of participation of the wider education community in policy deliberations was one of the main arguments for putting an end to most of the policies carried on during the time of Fujimori.

11.2.3 Policy making under Toledo

The collapse of Fujimori's regime opened up the promise of democracy once again. The transition government which followed put the emphasis not only on the need to have fair elections, but also on the need to democratise decision making and make it more transparent. In relation to education, this was the spirit that led to the National Consultation for Education, which was supposed to serve as a basis for the development of education policies in the following years. The Consultation was a first attempt to base policies on broader social participation, partly as a way of stopping the unilateral action of governments based on merely political criteria, and partly to guarantee a greater degree of sustainability of policies. This effort was later followed by other initiatives carried out by the government of Toledo, such as the creation of the National Council for Education and the National Agreement – a project that aims to gather representatives from all political parties and trade-unions for joint discussion and agreement of policy options for the country.

The effects on policy making of this willingness to engage in public debates, however, does not seem to have had all the desirable effects on actual policy processes:

(...) in the transition government there was an attempt to generate what they called a national agreement for education, and the strategy that was chosen was to do a big, massive, consultation, that would give it legitimacy, as a support and social backing, for the proposals that came out of the consultation, and at the same time have a commission of experts

(...) [Once] the transition government is over that disappears completely.

Lynch did comply with publishing the materials.... But the high administration of the MED, the new high administration, completely ignored that previous process. So, the supposed legitimacy of policies proposed on the basis of the consultation and the consensus really isn't such. (CASE 14 – Member of the National Council of Education)

The idea that Lynch did not follow the lines proposed through the Consultation is confirmed by a member of Lynch's team:

(int.) The National Consultation for Education...?

That's it... It's as if that had ended up being a bit ambiguous, that's the impression I got. I mean... I don't think that the new [Lynch] administration was against those agreements, it considered them good agreements, and it took some of them, I think, but it didn't enhance the agreements, you see? ... I didn't get the impression that there was anyone against them, but... it seems to me that what was done previously wasn't translated with so much vigour... (CASE 04 – Former ministerial adviser).

The two extracts above show that the process of public deliberation can take place at a formal level, and does not necessarily work to bind or guide the actions of policy makers. Some interviewees suggested that the problem with such attempts was that they were flawed from the beginning:

When you say I'll ask, but you ask in a completely... I don't know, a completely open, vague and flexible way... You'll always find people that think what you want people to think. So you can always put, quote textually what a certain teacher in a focus group said, no? Because it illustrates what you want to illustrate. But what someone else said, which might be the opposite, you won't include it. (CASE 13 – Member of the National Council for Education)

The National Consultation, have you seen it? The National Consultation for Education was an open questionnaire sent to every body, and people... like one goes to the supermarket and says I want this and that, then they put everything together and elaborated a list of priorities. And guess what came out? I want more teachers, better salaries, better libraries, better desks. That is, if you're going to do... and you ask people, 60 thousand questionnaires, what they want from education... That's not the way to do an agreement. (CASE 12 – Member of the National Council of Education)

The interviewees' criticisms focus on the open procedures on which the consultation was based which did allow agreements to operate as binding mechanisms. Furthermore, they suggest that the procedures for interpreting the consultation data were flawed and expressed the particular views of those responsible for the consultation. This, in part, might account for the later dismissal of the agreements (not only in Lynch's administration but also in those of his successor). But the problem of linking the outcome of deliberations with policy decisions seems to go beyond methodological issues. One interviewee, for instance, suggests that there have been other similar cases, which might indicate problems in the process of political representation, and the compromises the latter entails between both elected representatives and citizens:

with the APRA government [in the second half of the eighties]...in Meche Cabanilla's [ministerial] administration a series of very respectable ideologues and intellectuals were hired to imagine an educational change; this was motivated by what Matos Mar, who conducted the project, had called the 'popular overflow'. The commission was formed by Matos Mar, Luis Jaime Cisneros... very valuable people that worked for a year. You're not going to publish this, but an interesting thing is that apparently there's not a single document left about this. I've gone to the sources, even to Meche [Cabanillas], to ask for it. She must have it, but there's no sign of it. (CASE 06 – Former ministerial adviser and member of the National Council of Education)

This extract suggests that the problem is not that there have not been attempts to discuss educational issues, and possible education reforms, but, rather, that the product of such efforts does not materialise into actual policies.

The comments on the policy process during Fujimori's and Toledo's regimes suggest, in the first case, a lack of concern with validation of policy options through open debate – which is explained by the government's authoritarian characteristics; and, in the second case, when such concerns for deliberation were high, the comments point to the weakness of agreements as binding mechanisms for the actions of policy makers. In relation to this, it is relevant to note that according to some interviewees, being under an authoritarian context allowed for some continuity in policies, while according to others, the emphasis on consultation that existed when democracy was regained slowed the policy process, making the consolidation of policies difficult and giving way to discontinuities.

In education dictatorships bring good luck. The flourishing periods in education are Odria, Velasco [both military dictators]... (CASE 08 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

(...) we lost a lot of time on debates. A lot of time. That is, we paid too much attention to the inertias and to the force of those inertias.

I guess this was related to the democratic opening?

*Yes. I would have created, *mandum militari* [by military rule], the pre-school education direction and the technical education direction. To start with. Then I would have done the rural unification much faster. But there my friend 'X' who comes from NGOs wanted to please everyone, and he discusses again and again, and [in the end] I went out of the meetings, because I couldn't stand--- [They were] unbearable, I can't stand that. (CASE 11 - Former vice-minister of Education)*

These comments, together with the previous ones, suggest that a straightforward reading that identifies positive consequences for policy making of open debate needs to be tempered by further considerations. What does it mean that '*in education dictatorships bring good luck*'?, and the reflection in the second extract that it would have been better to act by 'military rule'. Is this so? Or is it rather a matter of problems in the conception of what public deliberation is, what it should entail, and, more fundamentally perhaps, a matter of problems in the representative system in a country like Peru? Some interviewees offered reflections in relation to this:

Why? It's difficult to say. You know, you know what plays a strong role in these things, it's ahhh... the lack of national aims, but not only as discourses, but...

Because as that they exist... As discourses they exist. But of assimilated national aims, that is, that have been adopted by the political elite if you want, by the political and intellectual elite, I think. That is, the intellectual and political elite, and I don't know whether also businesses and labourers, but at least the political and intellectual elite, to talk in the broadest terms... (CASE 04 – Former ministerial adviser)

In essence, policies should come from the people, express themselves through a representation system, attain cleanliness through a legislative process that really defends what is being proposed in a technical law, and finally be expressed in the acts of the citizenry, which does what it demanded. But in Peru that circuit is false, it's not like that. Our representation system is not a representation system. (CASE 16 – Ministry of Education Official)

The first extract suggests that one of the reasons why agreements do not materialise is because they fall into a vacuum of no 'national aims', that is, they do not fit within a broader framework that could give them strength and sustain them over time. The second interviewee reflects on the problems of political representation in Peru. O'Donnell's (1994) ideas in relation to the 'delegative' character of many Latin American democracies which 'rest on the premise that whoever wins election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term in office' (p.59) show some of the limitations of the system of political representation. The interviewee's comment, however, suggests a rather static understanding of representation processes, where there can be a perfect identity between representatives and citizens, and which contrasts with more dynamic forms of representation based on an ongoing relation between citizens and representatives, and which might be the necessary requisite for agreements, consultations and consensus to have an impact on the course of policies (Barnett 2003).

From a different perspective, and although this might imply a bit of a departure from the interview extracts presented in this section - but, as will be shown later in the policy narratives, is related to the conceptions of the policy process that prevail among policy makers – the understanding that interviewees appear to have of policy deliberation could be taken as a limitation on the possibilities of the process. In most cases, the conception of policy deliberation seems to have a rather formal character. It appears as a moment in policy making that is considered necessary for policies to have some legitimacy, rather than an ongoing process that might indicate a degree

of openness on the part of policy makers to incorporate new ideas, re-evaluate desirable courses of action and take on criticisms coming from the education community or the citizenry. Such a degree of openness might provide ongoing support for policies and fend-off radical discontinuities.

11.4 EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON POLICY MAKING: THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

The influence of international agencies on education policies has been particularly evident during the period under study, as most reforms have been funded through loan programmes. This makes it especially important to consider the extent and mode of influence that international agencies have had on policies, as well as the impact of this influence on policy discontinuities.

Although there are discrepancies in interviewee's opinions about the role of international agencies – specifically the World Bank (WB) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) – on the definition of policies, most interviewee's suggest that the mode and extent of such an influence is dependent on the characteristics of the Peruvian state, rather than on a single-minded approach on the side of multilateral agencies, as some of the existing literature suggests. Coraggio (1995), for instance, criticises the 'usual clichés that assign exclusive responsibility over national education policies to a supposedly monolithic World Bank', and suggests the need to analyse the ways in which international agencies interact with different states. Reflecting on the diversity of policies and outcomes that exist within the policy templates used in WB's projects, he suggest that states have got a considerable space for exerting their agency within the constraints and pressures of international organisations. This, however, does not imply that the assumptions under which the WB and other international organisations operate shouldn't be questioned and refined, as they surely help define much of the discursive arena in which education policies are made⁸³.

⁸³ For a detailed account of the World Bank's conceptions in education policy see Coraggio (1995) and Bonal (2002).

11.4.1 Imposition or lack of alternative views?

The widespread view that international funding agencies impose specific policy lines on developing countries was contested by most interviewees, who suggested that rather than a forceful imposition, the application of pre-defined reform lines depends on each country's capacity for negotiation and for coming up with alternative proposals. The following extracts illustrate the common view among policy makers and education specialists:

More than a problem with agencies there's a problem of weakness in the Peruvian state.

(...) the main issue is that the Peruvian state is not enough counterpart as to compel agencies to march to the country's rhythm and not the other way round. (CASE 07 – Former ministerial adviser and member of the National Council of Education)

(1) I'd also say that the [the level of external influences coming from international agencies] is a lot less important to the extent that depending on the elites that might get in on one side there will be better negotiation with the international organisations or there will be no negotiation. (CASE 08 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

[the] influence [of international agencies] depends on your own weakness. Because as soon as they see that you have capable teams and that you're not going yield, they yield. (CASE 11- Former vice-minister of education)

If the banks have more influence it is because of the MED's weakness, the country's weakness. In countries where ministries have had more institutional strength and capacity to propose, a leadership, a stronger professional capacity, the banks have had to support what the countries wanted to do. But here, sure, during the first part of Fujimori's government, up to 96/97, there wasn't much interest to make changes in education, no? Education was not a priority, definitely, and there was no interest... so there was pressure because the [World] Bank wanted to allocate its money, there were processes that were already in motion in other countries, important reform processes, in Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, everywhere, Argentina... (CASE 13 – Member of the National Council of Education)

The extracts point to various issues and open up a rich line of reflection in relation to the characteristics of the Peruvian state and its ability (or lack thereof) to come up with a coherent national development project which might constitute an alternative to the proposals of international agencies like the WB and the IDB. This standpoint is similar to certain outlooks on the effects of globalisation on different states. Hobson's and Ramesh's (2002) thesis, for instance, suggests that 'globalisation makes to states what states make of it', and, following interviewee's reflections something similar could be said about the effect of international funding agencies, that is, that agencies make to states what states make of them⁸⁴. This thesis stands in a middle ground between the more rigid structuralist perspective that seems to dominate critiques of the role of international agencies in developing countries, and which often portray states as being weak and unable to exert any kind of agency *vis a vis* the imposing force of agencies' discourses and practices. The interview extracts suggest - again similarly to Hobson's analysis of globalisation - that states do have some capacity to negotiate their entry into the dominant discourses of education reform that are promoted by international agencies. This thesis is also closer to the views on the state advanced in previous chapters, which suggest that the degree of agency that states have has to be understood in view of historically specific developments (Evans *et al.* 1985). The degree of influence of international agencies is the product of a relational dynamic in which the historical specificity of states combines with the (economic and discursive) strength of the agencies. In the case of Peru, the historical specificity – the state weakness pointed up by interviewees – has to do with the development of a national state on the basis of fundamental inequalities that hinder the consolidation of a stronger national discourse capable of articulating the needs of all into the national development, and also with the specific pathways followed in national development in which the growth of institutions has not been accompanied (much less sprung by) social changes.

Interviewee's comments point also to the country's institutional framework, which helps explain the incapacity to develop stronger national proposals capable of balancing those of international agencies. This links with and extends the ideas of the previous section, in which the lack of stronger institutions, seen as regular and clear rules for interaction, was seen to affect the state's capacity to pursue education policies.

⁸⁴ Katzenstein (1985) offers a similar analysis that considers the different ways in which small nations have adapted to the demands of an open – i.e. globalised - economy, and which also suggests that states can come up with different alternatives *vis a vis* external economic forces.

In the two-way relation between the country and international agencies, the state's incapacity to develop a clear discourse about educational reform – a policy core in Majone's (1989) terms -, seems to make the state more amenable to the influence of international agencies. On the other hand, it is also important to reflect upon the extent to which international agencies take advantage of such weaknesses, or at least play blind to them, rather than contributing to stronger forms of development which might include strengthening the process machinery and, in general, the state's capacity to articulate and sustain reforms over time.

11.4.2 Paper tigers: Negotiating with international agencies

At a more specific level, the idea that multilateral agencies do have some flexibility, which is dependent on the strength and capacity of states to come up with alternative proposals, is supported by various comments that offer a more detailed account of how negotiations between the state or the MED and the agencies take place:

I recently had to explain the difference between the European Union cooperation and that of the agreements with the WB (...) So, one can accuse the bank of many things, but you cannot say that it doesn't have a theory. When you have a theory you have a more difficult interlocutor. So the Bank's theory at that moment said, with empirical proof, that investing in teacher's wasn't profitable and that it didn't produce any results; investing in school materials was profitable and produced results. That's what the WB's theory said. So the Bank also said, and it still holds that, that the marginal achievement of one more year of primary education is enormous, while the marginal achievement of another year of secondary education is not so high, so we'll focus on primary education. That's the WB logic. However, if the country stands strong, the country can introduce into the Bank's agenda issues that weren't so well managed. (CASE 08 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

The last statement is supported by documents showing how the WB's original emphasis on primary education, specifically on school materials, was modified and incorporated a strong teacher training component and also funding for the post-secondary Bachillerato programme. At the same time, the WB's reluctance to fund reforms in other areas was bypassed by the state when it negotiated another loan with the IDB to fund reforms in secondary education. Furthermore, as the chronology of reforms shows, the World Bank's emphasis on institutional reform and finance was

accompanied and to some extent replaced, in the second half of the nineties, by a strong emphasis on educational and learning processes, which were the centrepiece of reforms, and which are not part of the WB's reform package. This suggests that countries can come up with alternative views to complement and even contest the proposals of multilateral agencies, and that the problem, rather than one of imposition, is one of incapacity to consolidate policy proposals capable of contesting the strong theoretical frameworks under which agencies operate. Whether such frameworks are adequate or not is a different matter. But as the extracts below show they can often help to anchor policies in a context prone to policy volatility due to inadequate institutional support. This is clear from the following extracts:

Given our system of political representation and the way in which we elect our representatives, there's no way that even a mid-term project will survive. So the only possible stability is that provided by those agreements. The agreements with the IMF... such budgetary compromises. A fierce cashier is a guarantee that we'll go in a certain direction for six or seven years. That's all. (CASE 16 – Ministry of Education Official)

(2) I'd say that in our case, international organisations have, curiously, functioned as an anchor (CASE 08 – Former Ministry of Education Officials)

In a context of weak institutions, where policies from the national level can change constantly due to personal and political agendas, the existence of an institution that has a strong theory and a series of structured proposals can help ground policies. This is clear in the following comparison between the WB and the IDB:

When we've spoken to the IDB people they've told us: we come and talk to a minister that talks about pre-school education, we talk with another minister and they say they want 150million for technical education. So the IDB designs, or pre-designs if you want, projects for day care units, for pre-school education, for technical education and finally for secondary education. Because, let's say, it doesn't come with such a clear template. Whereas the WB came with the idea that 'we do primary education', what shall we do with primary education? (CASE 08 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

A complementary view suggests, however, that the proposals of multilateral agencies can be negotiated if local elites and policy makers come up with strong alternative views. This is suggested by the interviewees whose comments are quoted below, who were largely critical of the influence of international agencies in education policy making:

As I told those who said that this was the only way: gentlemen, you have to get inside Peru, and Peru is the MED. If you want to help Peru you have to integrate with the MED. That they're lazy, that money gets lost... yes. That's definitely true... that they're disorganised, yes. Let's improve the MED's administration, that's the point.

(...)

(Int.) And to what extent did that bring you problems during the negotiations for the second WB and IDB projects?

No problem. They respected me as a tribe's chief. In this life, he who doesn't make himself respected is dead. (CASE 02 – Former Minister of Education)

At first there was some resistance, but then an excellent relation with the Banks. Because the teams that were created for the projects that would be funded by those agencies were very good teams of Peruvian professionals. (CASE 11 – Former vice-minister of Education)

The extracts, as with some of the comments quoted above, suggest that new policy ideas were built into the agendas of multilateral agencies, support the view that when policy makers at the national level are able to articulate strong and coherent proposals, multilateral agencies show a considerable degree of flexibility. This idea is also supported by the following extract:

Mr. X and I had an expression in the MED in which we said 'the Banks are like paper tigers'. Because you sometimes think that the Bank will support you when you have to act strongly in face of a government imposition. As an intermediary between the bank and the government you say 'this can't be done because the agreement doesn't establish it and the Bank will say no'... moreover, we considered that resources shouldn't be destined to certain things. And then the Bank comes, it negotiates with the government and that's it. (CASE 03 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

In this case, the flexibility of the multilateral agencies *vis a vis* the State is portrayed rather negatively, and suggests that in some cases multilateral agencies should have a stronger position to support certain agreed policy lines, rather than concede to governmental demands that might be an expression of politically specific concerns, rather than considerations about the quality or aims of policies – as was the case during the early years of the MECEP programme during the government of Fujimori.

A more articulate and also more widespread view, however, suggests that the imposition of agendas takes place more subtly, at the level of discourse rather than at the level of specific policies and programmes. The following extract suggests this:

Look, I've worked long enough with the Banks to understand, first of all, that not all banks think in the same way, and secondly, that they have different ethics and conducts, more than ethics, they have clearly differentiated conducts. And I think that the most responsible ones are those of the World Bank, which do have a statute that says that countries decide. Of course, we push them towards [becoming] modern states, relatively small, professional, putting money in the right direction. But that's very similar to the way a bonsai is done: in order to get the little tree to bend towards one way, you water it only on that side, or you put a little mat on the soil of the opposite side so that it won't get any light. So you're not doing physical things with the tree, but, in the long term, the tree does what you want it to do. I think that the Bank does bonsai with us. (CASE 16 - Ministry of Education Officials)

Although the interviewee is keen on contesting the argument that international agencies impose policies and programmes, the statement suggests influence at a broader level, in which agencies help shape the discourse on education reform, a kind of dominant orthodoxy. This, as suggested by the extract below, is an orthodoxy more at the level of the economy, which suggests the convenience of a reduced state and the need for more private investment, arguing that this model is more efficient, but also includes certain basic assumptions about education – as was suggested by one of the extracts above that pointed to the WB's emphasis on primary education and textbooks rather than teacher training.

The Banks have a lot of strength and in countries like ours, the weakness of teams responsible of elaborating policies is very deep. But apart from that, when the Banks say 'we lend on the condition that certain measures are taken', for instance, at the beginning of the nineties, reducing the state, slimming the state. And in the MED,

during the nineties, the best teams are fired... with this offer that if they left they'd receive several salaries, all the planning people left.

Look, I think that the Banks, the IMF, are institutions that have a view of the world, which translates into very specific proposals and policies. In 1990, in Jomtien, Thailand, a world conference on education for all took place. The team that formulated the proposals was a team from the banks. And what's their proposal? That of basic education needs. It's a minimalist proposal. (CASE 15 – Former Ministry of Education Official)

Interestingly, though, if one looks at investment figures and also at the number of public officials, both have risen during the period under study in which the influence of international agencies has been at its height. Moreover, the extent to which the model of a reduced state is actually promoted by international agencies is not clear, as it seems to be part of a widespread orthodoxy, shared by policy makers and governmental authorities, rather than a package imposed by specific agencies. Of course, the agencies have the power to exert pressure over governments, for instance, for the application of structural reforms. But it is also true that in many cases the policy makers who agree to such reforms and policies share the views of such international organizations, or do not have alternative formulations.

Having said this, the interviewee's arguments gain strength when seen in the light of some current analyses of the influence of international agencies in the region. Coraggio (1995), for instance, acknowledging that much of these agencies influence is the outcome of states' incapacity to come up with alternative proposals, suggests that, precisely taking this into account the agencies' proposals should be scrutinised as to allow refinement and a better impact on development⁸⁵.

The image that emerges from this analysis is a complex one showing that views which suggest a strong structural influence of international agencies at the national level of policy definition, as well as the opposite view that might portray absolute agency from countries *vis a vis* international organisations are limited. In particular this is because criticisms of the influence of international organisations have often focused on the discourses which they promote, and do not include reflections on how states operate and how this might make them more amenable to the influence of

⁸⁵ A detailed discussion of the proposals of the World Bank for education goes beyond the scope of this study and has been presented elsewhere, Coraggio (1995) offers a thorough discussion of such proposals.

international organisations. The analysis offered here supports a more intermediate view in which the influence of international organisations seems to be dependent on states' capacities, not only to resist the influence, but rather to come up with alternative views that could be translated into a national policy agenda. Using Giddens' (1984) terms, international agencies and national states seem to be in a relation of structuration. In the case of Peru the weak institutional matrix largely accounts for the state's incapacity to develop its own policy core to guide decisions at all levels. Having said this, however, it has also been shown that some level of contestation and local initiative does exist, and current policies are at least as much the outcome of national initiatives as they are of the influence of international agencies⁸⁶.

A more subtle analysis, which suggests that international agencies impose their views at the level of discourse, rather than at the level of specific policies, appears to be more plausible. This matches Bonal's (2002) analysis of the WB's hegemony in education policy discourses. The extent to which this hegemony exists, however, has also been shown to be a function of the perspectives of national elites and policy makers, who can share or buy into the assumptions and theories of international agencies – more as part of a shared orthodoxy than through open pressure -, rather than a product of international agencies imposing their agendas. From this perspective, institutions like the World Bank appear to have a strong influence on the development of such orthodoxy. Furthermore, it is relevant to question whether international agencies take advantage of national weaknesses to impose their agendas, and whether it is not also their responsibility to promote the development of stronger institutions and capacities at the national level as to ensure a growing capacity to articulate and sustain policy proposals. This seems to be minimised by an almost exclusive concern with the allocation and expenditure of resources.

Whatever the answer to this question, the present analysis has shown the need to analyse, at least with as much intent, the other part of the relation between states and international organisations, scrutinising states characteristics, policy making processes and the conditions that make different countries more prone to the discursive influence of international organisations.

⁸⁶ This matches Coraggio's (1995) analysis which suggests that the same is true all over the Latin American region in which there is considerable variety in terms of policies within the templates of quality improvement programmes funded by the World Bank.

11.5 SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

This chapter has presented an analysis of the institutional matrix in which education policy making takes place. Reflections have shown the limitations that the process machinery poses for the making of education policies: the lack of a civil service career, together with the prevalence of clientelistic and political criteria for the appointment of officials creates an unstable institutional structure which fails to give policies more sustainability, especially as there is little institutional learning in a context in which decision makers change continuously. The structure of the education bureaucracy also appears to make appointed officials more concerned with the political games that will allow them to maintain or advance their positions within the field of education policy, thus deepening a trend that is generally present in policy making (Ladwig 1994). Moreover, the legal framework within which policies are made was also discussed, showing how it makes the policy process very rigid and often demands that policy makers bypass the law in order to achieve desired goals. This, as was shown in the case of MECEP, which, by creating a parallel administration effectively avoided much of the usual red-tape of bureaucratic processes, hinders necessary processes of institutional strengthening. The analysis finally discussed the problems in the coordination between sectors in the Executive, especially between the MED and the MEF, which seem to operate according to different rationales.

The first section led the way to a more in-depth analysis of the processes through which policies are formulated. The focus was set on approaches to policy deliberation and legitimation, which are seen as a fundamental basis for the consolidation of policies (Fischer 2003; Majone 1989). The analysis was based on a discussion of policy making within the two main governmental regimes in the period under study – Fujimori and Toledo -, which showed that although there have been some changes as a consequence of the shift from an authoritarian to a democratic regime, there are trends in the legitimation of policies through deliberation and accountability that are constant within the two periods. The discussion showed that there are fundamental flaws in the understanding of policy deliberation, which is approached in rather formalistic terms, rather than taken as a fundamental process for the legitimation and strengthening of policies, as well as the basis for accountability processes. Both those policy makers who view the policy process in technical terms and those who view it as a political and not only technical process

understand policy deliberation as a moment, rather than a constitutive and central element of policy making. In this way, agreements about the direction of policies tend to be very weak and are rarely incorporated fully into considerations about when or how to change the direction of policies. This understanding of policy deliberation seems to be tied to a conception of political representation which matches O'Donnell's (1994) depiction of delegative democracies, in which those chosen to govern have absolute discretion to decide changes in the direction of policies – as it indeed is the case in Peru.

On a different track of analysis, the idea of policy deliberation, which has been especially promoted in recent years – for instance through the new Education Law passed in 2003 – appears to be tied to 'a logic of identity' (Barnett 2003). This idea is used to criticise recent approaches to democracy which promote direct rather than representative forms of participation, and which appear to assume the possibility of achieving a perfect identity between citizens' choices and political action. For Barnett (2003), in such approaches,

'democracy, understood as a certain kind of politics, is defined by holding together stable identities and transformation, decision-making and contestation, consensus and dispute in a pattern of deferred resolution of conflict' (p.14).

This 'presupposes the capacity to clearly distinguish between representation and the represented, between the event and its repetition, allowing for an analysis of misrepresentation in the name of the authentic identity of the represented'. In the Peruvian case, the new General Law of Education (Congreso de la República del Perú 2003), with its emphasis on citizen participation and consensus building, seems to assume that the solution to existing problems will come from allowing citizens to express their views and demands. This, it is expected, will correct the mismatch between the decisions made by political representatives and the end users of the education services provided by the state and will make the policy process more transparent and more 'adequate' to the citizens' will.

Following Barnett's (2003) argument for a particular form of representative government, as well as other recent definitions of deliberative practices (cfr. Fischer 2003), deliberation is here understood as a constant and open process, not aimed at absolute consensus, but at generating binding decisions that should set the limits for the actions of policy makers. In this view deliberation appears to be necessary not as a means to an end (i.e. achieving consensus), but as a fundamental process aimed

also at challenging notions of what should or shouldn't be done in education policies. This constant process, which requires a basic degree of openness on the part of policy makers, who must be willing to have their positions and views challenged, is limited, as Barnett (2003) suggests, by the need for specific action in relation to policy problems. 'The value of communicative practices of public deliberation cannot be properly grasped if it is detached from the objective of arriving at binding decisions' (p.12). In the case of Peruvian education policies, where discontinuity prevails, this basic aim of deliberative democratic practices seems to be overlooked, as policy makers have the power to change decision according to their personal and political positions.

The final part of this chapter discussed the role of international agencies in the definition of education policies. The inadequacy of critiques that assume a monolithic stance on the part of international funding agencies, and suggest that they impose specific templates wherever they act, was questioned, and it was suggested that it is necessary to give more consideration to the characteristics and weaknesses of the states that are influenced by these organisations. Following interview data, it was shown how in the case under study it appears that the weakness of the state, in terms of its institutions, leads to an incapacity to articulate coherent and sustainable policy proposals, and that this makes the state, and the education sector in particular, more amenable to the influence of international agencies. This view notwithstanding, it was also suggested that the influence of international agencies operated more at the level of discourse than in terms of specific policy suggestions. This was clear as it was shown how in Peru there have been policy developments that depart and even contradict the orthodoxy of organisations such as the World Bank.

With these considerations in mind, the next section offers a closer exploration of the particular ways in which policy makers operate within existing institutional arrangements. An analysis of policy narratives through which selected interviewees make sense and explain their experiences in policy making offers a strong and fundamental complement to the analysis of institutional arrangements, as it helps understand the ways in which individuals exert their agency therein.

CHAPTER 12 - POLICY NARRATIVES

The present section has the aim of exploring the ways in which individual policy makers operate within the institutional matrix analysed above. The narrative approach used in this section is particularly relevant to illuminate the constraints and possibilities of the previous analysis, especially as it introduces a focus on agency that complements the preceding emphasis on structures (i.e. institutions). Different individuals make use of institutional resources in specific ways, and a deep understanding of education policy making processes cannot overlook the impact of policy makers' agency on the definition of education policies.

Four interviews have been chosen for in-depth narrative analysis to illuminate the issues raised above. Three of the selected texts are from interviews with individuals who occupied important positions during the main ministerial administrations of the period under study (i.e. those teams in which major reforms or policy changes were introduced). The fourth narrative is from an interview with a senior member of the Teacher's Union, and has been selected to offer a point of comparison with the other narratives, as well as insights about the way in which the dialogue between policy makers and other stake holders in education takes place.

The analysis will proceed in two stages. At first, the narratives will be presented in detail. The selected texts are composed of extracts from the complete interviews showing the interviewees' reflections on their experience as policy makers, their views of the policy process, the arguments to support their decisions, their views of other teams, etc. – this was the criterion for the selection of extracts. I have chosen to present the narratives in an extensive form, with my comments following, rather than accompanying the presentation. In part this is because I do not want to fragment narratives that as a whole are powerful enough to convey to the reader many of the ideas I have worked through in the previous sections. Each narrative will be analysed in detail, they will be compared and theoretical connections will be made. The form I have chosen (of presenting the narratives first and then analysing them), rather than avoid theoretical elaboration, seeks to give the reader some space as to develop his/her own interpretations of the material and then judge whether my analysis and interpretations are convincing and match their own reflections (see Silverman 2000). This choice follows my understanding that text, interviews in this case, is polyvocal, and that although some readings are more plausible or better than others, different readings of the same text are possible.

The analysis of each narrative will seek to discuss the standpoints or reference structures from which interviewees speak and articulate their ideas, and which have to do with interviewee's values, political interests, and understanding of policy making. Reflections on these issues will then serve as a basis for comparisons across interviews, to identify common features, points of divergence, and, mainly, to understand how individual perspectives and attitudes towards policy making impinge on the policy process and on the existence of deep levels of discontinuity.

12.1 THE TECHNOCRATIC THWARTED ANGELS

The following pages report on an interview with two policy makers who worked in the MED during the second half of the nineties.

9: *(Int.) I'd like to begin with you telling me a bit how has it been... I know you came out of the MED in different moments, but not very far apart, but I'd like to know what happened in the MED, in terms of the administration, during the change of government.*

10: (1) I think changes began much earlier, that is, I'd say that the change of minister produced an important change in the MED's functioning and in decisions and in the importance that was given to things. When the reelection campaign began they all forgot about the education policies, of the sense that those education policies had. There's no transference of ideas in that moment.

11: *(Int.) You mean the change of minister between Palermo and Garcia Escudero?*

12: (1) Yes. On the contrary, there's a change in aims as a function of a political aim that the minister buys, and which has to do with the reelection process if you want, and what they could each gain in terms of particular/private interests. I think that before the change of government there's something there, no?

16: (2) ... I've increasingly got the impression that... there was a moment of design, a moment of implementation and exuberance, and a moment of decline, and we were in the exuberance moment when the minister changed. And when the minister changed, this Garcia Escudero, what there was... what was being expressed was a change in power, in the power structure. That is, there wasn't anyone left in the power structure that could support a reformist energy. I think there's a moment in Fujimori's government in which... apart from being authoritarian, it had underneath... it was the voice of a series of reform movements that were necessary for the country. But that energy was lost, and there's a moment in which the government is... the alliance between the government and Absalon, that is, the corrupt populists and the corrupt corrupt...

17:

18: (2) ... and that's very clearly expressed in the replacement in the MED with Garcia Escudero representing Absalon [ex member of the APRA party and leader of the hard wing of Cambio 90, Fujimori's party] and viceminister Galli representing Montesinos [Fujimori's chief of the intelligence agency who was behind most of the corruption acts of the government].

21: (2) But one thing is that there's... let's say, let's start differentiating things, there's reforms that were done, that were designed and were done and were effective...

22: (...)

23: (2) Like that of primary education. And that are now in the middle of a process of dismantling, which is slower, without any rush but constant. It's slower and more difficult, because what we achieved with primary

education was to capture everyone's imagination. The discourse about the change from teaching to learning, everyone repeats it; there's the discourse about putting the emphasis on long term skills, on competencies and less [emphasis] on memory and repetition, everyone repeats that; the existence of adequate school materials and teacher training, the fact that PLANCAD -I don't know if I should put it this way- had coopted local leaderships through the contests for executing entities... the MED's discourse is the discourse of the [local] leaders, there's no alternative discourse because no one has summoned them and told them an alternative discourse. But there does exist a fierce resistance above, a process of demolition.

27: (2) I remember a conversation we had when we entered the MED, which had to do with one thing... at the time when we entered the MED there was nothing, literally nothing, there's wasn't a single idea.... So it was a very adequate moment to design and organise things, to organise ideas and start to develop them. And at that moment there was no idea to combat. This is being combated as ideas start to rise, and you find opposition as you propose, and this results in that in this first stage you had a great amount of initiative. You're... and the others are beginning to come out of their retreat or their immobility or whatever it was. And that period somehow ended with the change of minister and with the entry of... with the last bit of Fujimori's government . And, let's say, then [after the government changed] begins a reversion on the basis of [arguing] that the ideas that had been developed then were not necessarily those that had to be used, that they were not the ones that were needed to change education, and nothing was done. What existed previously was dismantled and it wasn't replaced with anything. And with that there's a return to the situation that existed at the time of Garcia, and that of Belaunde and the previous governments, by and large. So what you now have, what you have after the transition government, from the transition government and on, is a huge discussion about what has to be done. What you have is a series of inertias that remain from the previous stage, which are, moreover, related to certain things, the inertias, with things that the MED has naturally got to do... Those inertias go on, but in reality they have no sense [orientation]... The MED recovers a certain capacity to minimally perform its role, no? But without leading the process anywhere. Without a policy.

30: (2) it is true that we didn't have... that when we entered the MED it was a waste land, but a waste land from our perspective, among other things, because to a large extent those of us who arrived into it did not belong to the environment.

31:

33: (2) There was no one in the MED, and nobody wanted to go. But outside there was Foro. I'm not sure whether Foro would say they didn't have ideas. They didn't want to go to the MED...

37: ... in spite that in 93 everyone had participated, nobody wanted to get their hands dirty, that's my impression.

40: (2) ... the people I called was mostly people that wasn't in the environment. The day we published, that we decided to publish the project... at first nobody paid attention to us, then came Palermo and with him we published that brochure that went around on the same day that Foro was presenting its project, and if you read our project and Foro's, ours is much more complete, structured, and it has a lot fresher ideas, that is... what I feel is that rapidly a group of intellectuals, who were new [to the field] but with great experience in NGOs and with knowledge of the heterogeneous realities of this country in urban and rural areas, and in some cases in the industrial sector... rapidly took off, but it didn't articulate itself. And there we have a problem...

43: *(Int.) It didn't articulate with what?*

44: (2) With Foro... with the inertia, and [what was] then the club...

47: (2) So what I feel is that, in general, what there was during Fujimori's government was this: the building of a technocracy, a technocracy that still lasted during [the time of] Garcia Escudero. It's during the time of Garcia Escudero that we finally signed the IDBII and during Garcia Escudero that we did the multiannual investment programme, which included the enormous rural project.

51: (2) ... what existed [at that moment] is a disarticulation between the technocracy and the government, the top-levels, the fujimont... fujimorism and absalonism did not permeate the technocracy, that's a destruction above. If you look at this through the documents of the investment programme, education hadn't lost its priority. What happens is that a repulsive crust of mobsters arrived to the government of education, and came to take away as much as could be taken away. But there's still some resistance.

63: (1) Two ideas stem from there [from the initial World Bank project], teacher training, that was very interesting for the people from Foro, and where people of Foro would benefit and was interested, they thought it had to be done, and the idea of this famous 016 ministerial decree, about decentralising schools. Those were the two things that existed, there was nothing else.

64: (2) But those things were already ours.

65: (1) But they also belonged to Hugo Diaz, and also to Gloria Helfer. I mean that they were issues that...

66: (2) They were issues in which there was confluence.

67: *(Int.) They were issues with which the education community did agree?*

68: (1) Including Foro, which agreed, there was no opposition. What there is, I think, is the construction of an education policy, which has to do with what (2) has been saying, with the technocracy, with these people who come... there's the construction of an education proposal, at the same time that Foro began to develop, as a contestation if you want, their own education proposal. So the debate wasn't about primary education, the debate was fundamentally about secondary education and about the issue of the Bachillerato. The proposals that were discussed about the structure of secondary education and the sixth year of the Bachillerato.

79: (2) We have contributed to the WB the emphasis on curricular change.

101: (2) I'd suggest that you go now to the Bank people and ask them how the current interlocutors are. Building a technocracy, which is going to be the interlocutor, takes a lot of time. Destroying the technocracy takes no time.

104: (2) ... what you had was a logic in which your allies grew up, I mean, as the implementation of the Bachillerato and the discussion about what had to be done in secondary education went on you gained allies.

But this proposal loses its political allies, it loses all its support before the government ends. And you lose allies not because of politics, but because the complete rottenness, to call it some way. So there stops being any discussion about this and, let's say, it's the correct line [of thought] against the incorrect line [of thought], you get polarised, if you want... that's the impression I've got.

105: *(Int.) And those allies are lost only because of the generalised political rottenness, or because there wasn't an effort from within... maybe it wasn't possible, I don't know, I wonder, to generate consensus?*

106: (2) *No, what (1) is saying is that when instead of dedicating time to win, to organise the teachers and systematise [what's being done] and establish links with local leaderships so that the Bachillerato project, which was in motion, would mature, flower, be systematised, would be appropriated... When you have to dedicate the time you should dedicate to this, to defend yourself from the [...] viceminister [...] who wants to change the content, when you have to dedicate to cut the long nails of the people who want to get their hands into public biddings... I think there's an earlier decline, but not because it had lost importance, the declaration [of intent] is maintained, but there's a kind of reinvestment of efforts... the efforts are not so much dedicated to win the war, but rather to stop your internal enemy from killing you.*

122: (2) I've got the impression, however, that an important issue is that we lacked the strength to touch the points that needed to be touched, and it's that you cannot mistake the education system, which has to achieve certain things, certain behavioural and learning changes in kids, with an employment and poverty alleviation policy for a certain social group [the teachers]. And we didn't achieve that. We formulated it, we documented it, we tried to push it, but that didn't happen, and it didn't happen during the administration of the first four ministers to whom I had the opportunity to show my documents, and it's not happening now.

125: (2) In education dictatorships bring good luck. The flourishing periods in education are Odria, Velasco [both military dictators]...

128: *(Int.) Flourishing in the sense that things moved forward?*

129: 2 Sure. Models were built, things were built, things were changed, standards were raised.

135: (2) I think that the next time, and this is contradictory with what I was saying before that we have to learn, because what we have to learn is that we mustn't dismiss anyone, we have to listen, we have to see what is going on in the scenario before making decisions, and we have to recover the things that are worthwhile.

136: *(Int.) And you think that wasn't done?*

137: (2) I think that in the change... we didn't do that because there wasn't anything to recover. Those who came after us... it was dismantling for the sake of dismantling, dismantling against the government's interests, because they've substituted the education development plan centred in rural education because that was the next stage, with an emphasis in native identities, bilingual education, ecological education for nothing. What are the educational issues today? That the teachers don't go into strike, for one hundred soles.

149: (2) It's very difficult to take away the pointer that says 'dictatorship' to a section of governmental action. It's not true that we didn't try to sow consensuses. What's more, we have managed to, and this is documented

and you can ask almost anyone, we have managed to get the people from Foro to design our things, and then they attacked them and stopped their names from being published. Why? Because they didn't want to be muddled with a pointer that said 'dictatorial'. So we have dedicated a lot of time. Could that battle be won? I'm not sure that it could have been won. Honestly, I'm not. I think we dedicated all the time we could have dedicated to that. In my view, dedicating more time to that wouldn't have rendered much more. I don't think that mistakes have to do with us not making enough efforts to persuade. As I said, we won all discussions...

152: *(Int.) people whom I explicitly ask about Palermo's administration say that he didn't do anything. How is it... what happens there? Was his administration, in which there was all the flourishing that you mentioned, so closed?*

153: (2) What happens? Well, that in that moment the WB project began, PLANCAD was done, the curriculum was changed... that is, things did happen, but... this is a petty system... but it's not only here that it works like that, it worked like that in Rome... Mario and Sila had the same problems (laughs), that enemies reinvent history.

190. (2) The last thing I wanted to say is that enemies defeat you, friends hurt you. And those who sacked us were our friends. So recovering from the wounds... recovering from a defeat is much easier than recovering from the poisoned wounds that friends inflict on you.

194: (2) There's this movie, which has become an icon [for us], that we've all commented it exists but we haven't managed to document its existence, it's the movie that I remember, in which the..., I don't know if it's Mitterrand in France or the Spanish socialists, or the English socialists, but they're received at the door by the civil servants in their suits. It's the hippies getting to the Ministry of Education and the ministry's general secretary, who is a civil servant who doesn't change, received the minister and tells him 'we're going to defend the ministry from you'. That mythical image, I can't remember which movie it is from.

A clear storyline is presented by the interviewees at the beginning of the narrative, which talks about three different moments of policy making during the second half of Fujimori's government: a moment of design, a moment of exuberance and a moment of decline. The story they tell focuses mostly on the moment of exuberance and the moment of decline, and begins by suggesting that the decline of the nineties' reforms began during Fujimori's government, and not after elections took place.

The differentiation in terms of moments is accompanied by another distinction that suggests that corruption, and the degradation of policies, took place above, that is, in the higher political spheres, and not at the level of the technocracy that was in charge of carrying out the reforms. On the other hand, the interviewee's stress that there were things done, that reforms were carried out, in contrast to what is

suggested by many critics. These two lines of analysis lead to the development of two ideas that are central to the narrative identity presented by the interviewees, that is, their identity as technocrats who had nothing to do with the government's corrupt actions 'above', and their identity as leaders of an innovative and reformist energy in the MED.

In their account, the disarticulation between the higher power spheres of the government and the technocratic policy makers took place with the change of minister in 1999, when a new minister entered the MED and changed the emphasis on reforms for a concern with supporting the president's second re-election. This point, which coincided with the implementation of many of the proposed reforms, opened up an internal front in the MED, against which the 'technocrats' had to fight. This front added up to the external front of the critics that were part of the wider education community, and which opposed many of the proposed reforms – particularly those related to the new structure of secondary education and the introduction of the Bachillerato. In contrast to the politicians who were concerned with electoral matters, the interviewees portray themselves as technocrats concerned with the quality of reforms. The destruction above, however, interfered with their reformist aims, as they had to engage in defending the reforms from the 'long nails of the people who wanted to get their hands' on public funds. The moment of decline is thus one where the politics of the government interfere with the policies of the education sector, a moment when support from above was not only lost but the space for action was also reduced because of changes in the objectives of the education sector (i.e. supporting the re-election). The technocrats lose the support from the vertical authority of the government, and in view of the weakness of other institutional mechanisms, the reforms lose momentum and decline.

On a different line of argument, the narrative speaks to the critiques that suggest that nothing was done during the time of Fujimori. The interviewees stress their contributions and portray themselves as highly innovative, and as having 'captured everyone's imagination' with the shift in pedagogical discourse from teaching to learning, and on competencies rather than memory and repetition. The innovativeness of this discourse is highlighted by contrasts with the situation they found at their arrival to the MED, and which is described as a 'wasteland' where there were no ideas. In this case they seem to be referring to ideas in relation to pedagogical changes, rather than those to do with the institutional reform of the system (for which, as has been discussed, there had been a series of reform proposals). It is interesting to note, in relation to this, how repetition and memory are

dismissed as inadequate, but the conquest of everyone's imagination is later described by saying 'everyone repeats that'. This, and the idea that local leaderships were co-opted (literally: neutralized or won over through assimilation into an established group) by the new discourse suggests that the new pedagogical discourse was imposed from above, by the technocrats, who deemed it innovative and adequate, rather than having been discussed with the receivers of the discourse. This idea matches criticisms made of the nineties administration, for not having been concerned with deliberation of policy options.

The lack of openness to dialogue on the part of policy makers is explained by reference to the attitude of interlocutors in the education community, who are described as not wanting to get their hands dirty. The opportunism of critiques is highlighted by reference to how people who had participated in the design of the 90's reforms did not allow their names to be published in public documents, and criticised the reforms when the change of government took place. In general, it can be said that the narrative portrays a tense relation between the technocrats and the broader education community. The lack of policy deliberation is explained by saying that deliberation was not always possible due to the vested interests of many groups, but also because too much time was spent fighting internal political fights.

The moment of decline goes on until Toledo's government, in which policy makers administer the return to stagnation. In this process, the enemies reinvent history to fit their own views and interests.

Throughout the narrative the interviewees portray themselves in almost heroic terms, as having fought important battles within the MED, for pedagogical matters, and also with the corrupt politicians that took over the policy arena at the end of the government. Another battle was fought with enemies from outside the MED who opposed the reforms. In the end, the battle was lost, and interviewees were wounded, not by their enemies, but by their friends, who took them out of the MED and then administered the return to stagnation on the basis of an opportunistic discourse that stressed that Fujimori's government had been dictatorial, and overlooked other more technical efforts to reform the system.

In this narrative account, policy is portrayed as a technical process. Policy options are seen as the outcome of technical decisions. Politics is seen as interfering with the actions of technocrats, and deliberation is understood as imposing views that are considered technically adequate, rather than an open conversation among people who might see things in different ways.

12.2 THE COWBOY

The following narrative is from an interview with one of the education ministers in Alejandro Toledo's government.

29: Fujimori didn't have an educational project and said, well, let the WB do what it can, I want to build schools. He devoted to build schools and left the discourse to the WB. Now, of course the WB faced two other problems, the officials and the teachers, and they developed what I called the 'helicopter policies'. They see a place from above, go down, camp, give out projects and then leave.

50: When the president offered me to be in charge of the MED, I took it as a political job and my first reflection was: here, in order to develop an educational reform and for me to take care of what was needed and of what experts said was required, the problem has to be dealt with politically; isolate the enemies of a democratic education policy and win the largest possible amount of allies. That is, a reasoning in terms of political tactic or strategy, if you want to take it like that.

52: Who's the everyday power in the MED? Patria Roja⁸⁷. Well, I've known Patria Roja for 30 years (laughs). When ministers arrive in office they get scared. So, as an old teacher of mine told me, here the figure has been inverted, here it's members of Patria Roja who get scared when they see you.

54: My role is that of a political leader -I had some negotiators, I didn't negotiate anything, the leader doesn't negotiate, his advisors do- a political leader who had to head an education reform process, and to do it, it was necessary to isolate those who opposed it. The first to oppose it were the ones that controlled the apparatus at an intermediate level, through the majority control of the union.

56: I arrived and realised that there were some good things, like that Patria was in a fierce crisis in relation to its hegemony in the union, in its control of the union, because its authoritarian style had been outworn, particularly during the last stage of the struggle against Fujimori.

58: The first thing I do is begin negotiating with everyone, and scared-off Patria Roja. They told me 'we are the Ministry's representatives'. And I said 'wait a minute, how's this that you are...'. Meche Cabanillas had just promulgated a law recognising the union and I consulted Villaran, who was the Labour Minister, about what was required, and he told me that I needed to ask them for a registration roll. I said to them 'okay, I'll recognise you' and I think I had to give them one sol for each teacher for the union's quotation, and they wanted a cheque for three or four hundred thousand soles every month. So I said no, this is not the Soviet Union, I am a socialist, not a communist. I am not going to organise your union. If you want a union then you have to present a registration roll.

62: To what extent were the negotiations with Patria Roja related to educational issues, and to what extent were they cut off from education in the sense that they emphasised...

⁸⁷ The Teacher's Union is strongly associated with a radical Marxist party, Patria Roja, which is said to have control over the Union –as the Union's leaders are members of the party.

63: Patria Roja is a party that has evolved from radical Maoism to absolute clientelism. What they seek is to reproduce the clientele '*ad eternum*', and they live from that.

67: I spent the previous year saying these men live from controlling the MED's apparatus. While they control it no one will be able to do an education reform.

73: I'm telling you about the political design. What happened with that design? That Patria Roja couldn't go on strike. Because they were worried about fighting against me, not here in Lima, I had surrounded them nationally, in twenty places. And apart from this I had a group, which I called my portable regional directors, a group of '*compañeros*' [comrades], old militants like me who started to work with me in the MED and whose nickname was the '*explosives deactivation unit*'. I sent them wherever there was a fight.

78: This allowed... it was a strategy. The other strategy was *vis a vis* the World Bank [WB] and the International Development Bank [IDB], which were the other problem.

79: *(Int.) Problem in what sense?*

80: That they had been the kings.

81: (...)

82: It was the issue of control over MECEP. So I dissolved MECEP and I sacked the chief of MECEP (laughs). One day the guy refused to obey an order of mine... I had been told not to touch MECEP because the [World] Bank would have me dismissed immediately, that I wouldn't last 24 hours if I touched MECEP. So, I said, let's see.

84: Look, quarrelling is a state of grace for me, I'm happy when I'm quarrelling (laughs).

85: (...)

86: They were a group of capable professionals, they had everything from porters, chauffeur, accountant, lawyer, all theirs. They were a kind of... I called it the colonial enclave inside of the MED. I called the banks and told them, gentlemen, I understand why this MECEP phenomenon has happened, but it has to end. Because supposedly one of the aims of the cooperation is to institutionally develop the MED.

98: *(Int.) Did you already come with that reform programme or was it a programme based on an assessment of the situation since you entered the MED?*

99: No, it's a programme based on an evaluation of the situation since I entered the MED. Because I didn't know I was going to be minister until ten days before, or even less, a week.

104: *(Int.) there's people who criticise your administration for having prioritised, at least apparently, the political struggle, political discourse, over technical criteria...*

105: It's people who have never transformed anything in their lives. In order to make changes you have to accomplish both things, it's a process that walks on two legs.

107: *(Int.) There's decisions, like that of the closure of Bachillerato and of the changes that were taking place in secondary education, that were justified (in teachers workshops for instance) in terms of political criteria, saying things like that what was being done during the time of Fujimori had taken place in the context of an*

authoritarian government, which lacked legitimacy, and that you therefore had to close down those things...

108: That's a judgement that surprises me. The secondary team was highly qualified, and Gorriti [the team's chief] is a first class man. What I did was, rather, accelerate them. What I found in the technical part of the MED was, first of all, little identification with the MED.

115: And I think, therefore, that this was partly because of groups of friends who entered in the 90's and installed themselves in certain offices. Some of them reacted violently when I entered and I had to fire them. With the others I reached an agreement.

117: I think that sectorial policies need to be done on the basis of a political leadership, I do not believe that technique is neutral. I believe that in the world there is competition among diverse interests, and it was therefore an outlook that sought to establish a reform programme.

128: The first cabinet was about 'let's do whatever can be done for the country'. I felt I was part of a transaction cabinet. I knew that just like I'd been give a 'white card' to do the education program, Kuczinski [the finance minister] was carrying out an economic policy that I disagreed with, and I told him many times in cabinet.

130: What precipitated my dismissal from the MED was the type of policy [politics]... the president didn't agree... he didn't want to fight with Patria Roja. Toledo basically reasoned in the sense that things would be quiet, and in order to change you have to step on eggs, or, better, break eggs and step on people's feet. And he doesn't want to step on anyone's feet nor break a single egg.

145: I was aware that I was coming from a minister like Rubio, who changed very few people who were basically coming from the autocratic regime. I changed, and for me this was a matter of principle, viceministers, the secretary general, and I moved national directors, so that the viceministers could work; and regional directors, because if I didn't change them how could I have developed my political strategy of isolating Patria? It was impossible. Now, that this affected the MED's basic structure? Yes, but it allowed for the successes I had.

147: *(Int.) How do you summarise those successes?*

148: Having launched the first education reform programme after 25 years.

150: *(Int.) But it's interesting, because that almost hasn't been felt with the change of minister...*

151: The minister, of course, froze it. I can tell you about the specific measures he froze, with which he deactivated the programme. It was a programme that had two feet, the pedagogical foot and the participatory foot. He deactivated both.

155: I mean, I launched a comprehensive reform, with a vision, which no one had done, nor in the 80's or in the 90's, and which the two who followed haven't done either, and I don't know if Sota will dare... Sota has taken on some of my programme, and has taken back some of the people that worked with me.

160: *(Int.) And Ayzanoa is a person with a political agenda of his own, different from yours?*

161: No, I think that Ayzanoa simply wanted to mark the difference, he wanted to mark the difference and he is used by the forces that wanted to go back to stagnation.

163: What existed before was the tension between the bureaucratic policies of the WB and teachers and officials who got defensive, and Fujimori who built schools of dubious quality. That's what existed before. Rubio took a first step, the Consultation, which, if he hadn't done I'd probably have had to do it, and I launched this reform programme, which sought to establish an open an explicit continuity with the Consultation, I said it, and, what is more, I edited the Consultation documents. And Ayzanoa administers the return to the stagnation in which we are today.

168: The day I left the MED I said 'I'll come back with my flags, don't worry, I'm absolutely sure' (laughs).

189: What I've heard in terms of critiques to my administration comes, on one hand, from people who have lived the World Bank and who are bothered by the fact that I am political, and who believe that an expert will be able to produce educational transformations, which seems absolutely false to me. And who say, paradoxically, that I moved too fast. And on the other hand, Patria Roja says that there's no need for a reform project or for any education policy, that what is necessary is to accumulate forces for the revolution.

192: Look, with the knowledge of the sector I had at that time... I don't know, I'm pretty satisfied with what I did. I don't know how I could do things differently. I would have liked to have more sympathy from the experts outside the MED.

(...)

195: Basically the people from Foro Educativo, who looked at me 'from the balcony'. I worked with some of them...

204: ... emergency programmes are a foolish thing, because education is structurally in a state of emergency, what we need here is a serious education reform, and a compromise on the part of society and political organisations. It's stupid to introduce an emergency programme if this has always been in a state of emergency. It's not a matter of teachers dedicating a year to literacy, I'm not saying that's not fundamental, of course it is. What I'm saying is that that if we do not begin a political-ideological campaign against the influence of Maoism as the ideology that organises what I call an archaic way of thinking among the teachers, we can bring ten thousand teachers educated in another planet...!!!

The interview begins with the presentation of two main issues that frame the whole narrative account: the existence of enemies of democratic education policies, mainly the radical and politicised branch of the teachers Union and the 'colonial enclave' of international organisations (the World Bank and IDB); and secondly, the idea that Fujimori was only concerned with building schools and left policies to the World

Bank, which had a project that was not articulated to the national interests. These two lines of analysis explain chosen paths of action and are also the basis for responding to critiques, as the latter are disqualified for representing the vested interests of these two groups (the teacher's Union and international organisations).

The narrative bears strong resemblances to Marxist analyses of power and class struggle, which appear to have been extrapolated to the analysis of the educational situation and the 'politics' of policy making. The teachers Union is portrayed as a group so concerned with radical revolution, that it ends up being reactionary and opposed to any kind of change in policy lines. It opposes change in principle and is dedicated to 'reproduce the clientele *ad eternum*'⁸⁸. On the other hand, imperialistic (colonial) forces are seen as represented by international organisations such as the World Bank, whose influence, therefore, needs to be neutralised. The use of such analytical concepts is explained by the interviewee's background as a militant of left-winged parties and as a socialist (as he describes himself).

The narrative also includes some basic assumptions about the previous government, which again frame and help justify chosen options. A central idea in this sense is that there was nothing done in terms of serious reforms during the previous government, and that Fujimori was only concerned with building schools – a widespread view among policy makers from Toledo's government, as well as among educational analysts. Secondly, the interviewee suggests that, given the government's lack of concern with education, international agencies had complete control over the definition of policies. Finally, there is an analysis in terms of how the policies of an authoritarian government needed to be opposed 'in principle', and that both the policies and the people who had been behind them had to be removed.

The interviewee's narrative identity is based on these assumptions, and builds from there to present a positive self-image. Not only does he credit himself for having neutralised the enemies of a democratic education policy (i.e. the Teacher's Union and the World Bank) through his aggressive approach, but also for having done the first educational reform in more than two decades.

Moreover, the interviewee presents himself as a politician, and questions existing conceptions of policy as mere 'technique'. The conception of 'politics', however, deserves some analysis. Politics, and policy, are seen in terms of struggle, and at some point the narrative elicits images of war (e.g. neutralising enemies, political strategy, quarrelling as a state of grace, returning with 'our flags'). The political

⁸⁸ These ideas are further developed in Lynch (2003).

aspect of policy making is seen in terms of engaging in battles against specific fronts. The presence of such metaphors, and the analysis offered in the narrative clearly stem from the interviewee's political background.

As in other cases, the determination of policy lines on the basis of personal views is remarkable. It is the personal understanding of things by the elite policy makers that determines the lines of action followed by the MED. The policy lines therefore shift and change according to the personal views of the elites that come to power. In this sense, it is relevant to note that there is no mention of processes of deliberation and discussion in the determination of policies. The narrative is rather, the story of how one individual understands the problems of the education sector –which in this case have to do more with the political conditions for implementation of reforms, rather than with educational or pedagogical issues.

12.3 THE VICTIM

This interviewee was one of the education ministers during Alejandro Toledo's government.

6. *(Int.) First of all I'd like you to tell me about how is it that you entered the MED. From what I know you came in amidst an important crisis in which Mr. Lynch came out and you had already been in the MED as vice-minister. I'd like you to narrate how was the shift from Lynch's administration to yours.*

7: I'll start by saying that it would be convenient to talk about the antecedents.

9: 'In the first place, I am a friend of Alejandro Toledo [the president], we lived together in Washington'

13: In the 2001 campaign I did the education policy, the education policy proposal of *Peru Posible*

16: Since my job as a minister began a very strong campaign was triggered.

17: *(Int.) A campaign in what sense?*

18: A campaign against me.

21: Because, one, incontrovertible facts, Lynch's education policies were not the policies of *Peru Posible*. They were Lynch's policies.

24: *(Int.) In what sense are you an institutionalist?*

25: In the sense that if there is a Union that is approved by law, and which has negotiations with the MED, I cannot propitiate the fracture of that Union by promoting the existence of other groups. A minister has to be institutionalist.

37: *(Int.) Would you say this was one of the main contributions of your administration [the Huascarán Programme]?*

38: Of course. 1500 teachers, we created the Huascarán portal and the knowledge central. We put computers all around the country. That was the difference.

52: *(Int.) There's people who criticise your administration because it generated a rupture in programmes and policy orientations which, according to some people, was even stronger than the one experienced during the change of government. What do you think about this?*

53: Well, yes, I had to make that rupture. Because I'm not here to continue with a policy that, in the first place, is not based on the political policy, on the political proposals of the government.

55. a lot of time was lost. I'm giving you concrete data. IDB 1 had not made any progress. Mr. Laguzi, the expert from IDB, came and asked, what happened? Time was winning us. And I therefore had to work at a forced pace.

58: I ask, and I told this to Mr. Juan Abugattas on TV (on Cecilia Valenzuela's programme). Where's the feasibility study for the New Secondary, what are its costs, what's its conversion plan? He couldn't answer, Mr. Abugattas. They prepared an ambush. Cecilia Valenzuela had asked me for an interview in which I would be able to talk about my proposals. In the first place, to bother me, they put me in a programme where everyone was saying bad things about me. But I have a lot of experience... An the Juan Abugattas came out, there was a polemic, and he couldn't answer.

72: *(Int.) How would you explain the fact that Lynch was able to get so much out of Toledo's government plan?*

73: Well, it's because in Peru much is about the personality of ministers. ... and Lynch had his own political project.

74:

75: We don't have a mentality like that of Saxons, simply cold and with more incorporated planning criteria, of thinking more about state policies than about government policies.

76:

77: *(Int.) And how do you think that this affects the success of education policies?*

78: Well, a lot, not only educational ones but also those of other sectors.

79:

80: *(Int.) And did you take this into account during your administration, or is it something almost inevitable for a minister to be carried away by the political game?*

81: No, no, no, if I wanted to put a tag onto my administration it would be 'institutionalist' and technical. Totally technical.

94: *(Int.) Would you say that in this transition between Lynch's administration and yours there was an initial evaluation of what needed to be done?*

95: You have touched on an issue. Because people say I put a very personalistic mark...

113: Critics of our administrations now blame us. That's not right, the problem of education hasn't begun with Ayzanoa, or Malpica or Lynch.

117: *(Int.) The thing is that there have been a lot of expectations in relation to Toledo's government and to the administrations that have been in the MED during this government, and the feeling is that, although they might not be responsible for the education crisis, they do seem to have a big responsibility in providing solutions for it, which for some reason haven't taken place, partly due to continuous changes...*

118: To me that seems unfair. On the first place, the product of education cannot be seen in the short term. It is always seen in the long term.

<p>120: <i>(Int.) Then how can it be said that in the time of Fujimori, with the reforms that took place, nothing had happened?</i></p> <p>121: The PISA and UNESCO tests show it.</p>
<p>123: <i>(Int.) But it could be said, using the same terms, that not enough time had gone by...</i></p> <p>124: I don't think so. Ten years are enough time.</p> <p>125:</p> <p>126: <i>(Int.) But Fujimori's reforms begin in 95, with the World Bank and IDB projects...</i></p> <p>127: But it is also that those projects were badly done.</p>
<p>130: [At the beginning of the Fujimori reforms the interviewee Ayzanoa was called to give his opinions]</p> <p>131:</p> <p>132: I told them that they had to begin with the teachers. I told them at that time, and they, well, they battled me. The row with me is not from now, it is from much earlier. I told them 'this is going to fail'.</p>
<p>[In what follows the interviewee talks about the way he dealt with the Teachers Union Strike]</p> <p>140: I had to look for solid bases, I am an institutionalist, a man of principles, who acts according to laws.</p> <p>142: I am not interested in whether the teachers are from Patria Roja, they are the MED's representatives, accredited by law. And then I get told that there is a co-government, Mr. Trahtemberg said that. He should read the 40 points, in no place is a co-government mentioned. In no place.</p> <p>144: There was an orchestrated campaign.</p> <p>146: Then they said that the [teachers' assessment] was based on documents. The assessment, in two agreements, it is said that it will be in accordance to documentation but also through tests. Then why is Mr. Trahtemberg and the people from the National Council for Education saying that it was a co-government. They took advantage.</p> <p>147: What calls my attention, to be honest, is that all that method of the 'chicha' (tabloid) newspapers, of slandering, of lying and lying... something still lingers...</p>
<p>149: <i>(Int.) And do you think that [spending too much time on quarrels and 'campaigns' like this] has to do with an issue that education receives a lot of support in political discourse but maybe not so much in practice?</i></p> <p>150: That's it. Simply --- when Mr. Fujimori was in power the MED went on really slow, there were no radical reforms and they only worked with a varnish, with PLANCAD, PLANGCED, and it was NGOs that won.</p> <p>151:</p> <p>152: We said no. Firstly, we are going to work seriously in language and maths. Now no one says that it was minister Ayzanoa the first to suggest this.</p>
<p>159: Honouring the truth, it wasn't possible to go ahead with the implementation of the IDB I and II programmes because the MEF did not provide the money that corresponded to the national counterpart.</p>

160:

161: *(Int.) So maybe it wasn't so much a problem of Lynch's administration, but a coordination problem?*

162: No, not of coordination, but simply that the MEF did not comply with what it had to give. When the tri-monthly compromises [with the banks] arrive, the MEF doesn't pay out all it had to, but just what was available. And with this the banks didn't give out the money.

178: I stood up to Ernesto Cuadra [from the World Bank] in 92. 'This is not like this', I said. (...) But everyone left me alone. If they had listened to me in 92 the situation would be different.

207: But [when I entered the Ministry] I found nothing.

211: *(Int.) To finish the interview, I'd like to ask you what taste has your pass through the MED left you, what is your balance?*

212: Happy and joyful. I did, and I'm going to give you a copy of this, I did what hadn't been done during the previous administration.

213:

214: (...)

215: I am not a politician, I am a teacher, a technician, an education planner.

The narrative is initially framed by two main stories. On one hand, the closeness to the president and the involvement in the design of the party politics, which seems to be used to confer authority to the arguments offered. On the other, the existence of an orchestrated campaign to discredit the interviewee, and which is used by the interviewee to discredit criticisms of his administration⁸⁹. These two storylines help the interviewee to narratively construct his identity (Langellier 2001; Riessman 2004) as a policy maker, as someone with authority (i.e. closeness to power) and as someone who faced criticisms from people with vested interests (i.e. discrediting him

⁸⁹ Some of such criticisms appeared in the media:

"The applause that educational initiatives received in the time of Nicolas Lynch have turned into complaints by experts in educational issues, for what they describe as a gerontocracy without much wisdom.

Apparently, the minister's main task is to fill posts in the regions by militants of Peru Posible. He is also accused of appointing friends and colleagues for political decision posts, whose common trait is having over 65 or 70 years, and having graduated from La Cantuta [a teacher training university].

Ayzanoa has paralysed the rural education project, in which, for the first time, the Peruvian State pledged to use national and international funds to benefit children from rural areas during the next ten years. This is part of the dismantling of the main initiatives of Lynch's administration." (Lauer 2002)

and the government) –rather than legitimate criticisms about the quality of his policy decisions.

Throughout the narrative there is constant use of positive self-descriptions ('I am an institutionalist', 'I did what wasn't done before'), which conforms to idea that interviewees tend to present and perform a 'preferred identity' (Convery 1999)⁹⁰. In this case, the preference is allegedly for following a legalist (institutionalist) approach to policies, which contrasts with the 'innovative' and 'radical' self-descriptions seen in the previous two narratives.

These positive self-descriptions contrast with the negative descriptions offered of the previous administration - as being political. The arguments that support such criticisms are not always solid and at times are contradictory. Such contradictions undermine the coherence of the narrative, and suggest that at least part of what is said by the interviewee has been accommodated at the moment and is not part of a more articulated view. Apart from the contrasts, the interviewee resorts to changing the subject matter when questioned about delicate issues. This can be seen at points during the interview when the narrative was contested: the interviewee's strategy was often to divert the conversation into different issues – saying for instance that not enough time had gone by as to judge the adequacy of his proposals, when he was actually being questioned about the changes he introduced in his predecessor's policies.

The interviewee's self-description also includes a positive identification with the teachers ('I am a teacher'), which is the basis for his reluctance to confront the Teachers' Union –which was the case of his predecessor. He also talks about doing things according to the law rather than about introducing changes. This contrasts with other narratives which focus on the need to radically reform the education system, both institutionally and in terms of pedagogical matters.

The narrative is critical of both the policies of the previous government – which are described as 'badly done', or by saying that the government 'did not do anything' – and of those of the previous administration – which are portrayed as being based on a political project and as not consistent with the policies proposed by the government's party. The criticisms are not always well sustained, especially when considering that according to other interviewees the government's party did not have an articulate set of education policy proposals.

⁹⁰ Convery (1999) suggests that in an interview process 'The opportunity to tell a story can be eagerly exploited [by respondents]... who skilfully and unconsciously employ rhetorical devices to reconstruct an identity that will be affirmed' (p.132).

In terms of the interviewee's identity, these strategies (the framing of the narrative, the diversion from issues that contrast with the story that is being told, the negative portrayal of other teams and the positive portrayal he offers of himself), help to portray him as someone who, knowing what to do, and having the authority and commitment to carry on necessary reforms, was under attack by people and groups with political and other vested interests.

The analysis can also reveal a tendency to impose personal views over the policy process. This comes through in the interviewee's emphasis on what he did, as compared to previous administrations –particularly by the way in which he dismisses the proposals of other teams. The use of the 'I' pronoun, to suggest a sense of personal authorship of policies, expresses a will to imprint a personal mark over policies. This seems to be the main driving interest in the changes introduced during this minister's administration.

Furthermore, the interviewee has a view of policy making as an ideally technical process. He dismisses politics as part of the policy process. This comes through in his emphasis on his administration being 'totally technical' and of him as an 'institutionalist', as well as in his criticism of the political nature of the preceding administration.

This view, together with a position that shows no willingness to offer justification for chosen policy paths – but which, rather, dismisses questions and criticisms as part of an 'orchestrated campaign' - suggests a lack of willingness to engage in policy deliberation. Policy making appears to be the product of unilateral decisions on the part of ministerial officials, who make use of the authority conferred – 'delegated' in O'Donnell's (1994) terms - to them by the government, but with little disposition towards accountability. The technical view of policy making indicates that there is little emphasis on gaining political support for policies, and this seems to be at the root of the problem of discontinuity.

12.4 THE RADICAL?

The following narrative is from an interview with one of the leaders of the Teacher's Union:

7: What happened in the times of Fujimori is that, in the terrain of education, this dictatorial government had very specific objectives. What he wanted, not from his own initiative, but fundamentally from the World Bank's and the IMF's recommendations, what he sought was to privatize education, on the one hand, and on the other, naturally, finish with the teaching profession, make it weaker in other words. And this was insinuated in various ways. At first in a more impudent and open way, even through legal instruments.

8: And then, logically, [came] the makeup to make this more digestible, that parents, the community, businesses, councils, could participate in the administration and in all that had to do with education. In 1992, however, this norm was derogated... or not even derogated, it wasn't approved in congress because there was a huge protest headed by our Union, the parents and some democratic sectors in the country, that had a political presence in the parliament....

13: What we see is this: that there's two moments in Fujimori's government. One first moment, as I told you, it was open, uncontrolled, no? Without any interest, even with legal norms. No? He had the certainty that the people was going to support him, and that the teachers would have to accept, but this wasn't so. So he goes back, but doesn't forget about his privatising plan. Rather, he uses a different strategy, a more perverse but more subtle strategy. And through not so grandiose norms, not so open ones, but more specific norms – among them things to with the curriculum, the teacher's training, the training of headteachers, etc. etc., but all of them with the support of the World Bank. So this is a new strategy, more subtle, more hidden, no? It's not laws being published, but decrees.

16: They were privatising strategies because in essence what they sought was that. That is, although it wasn't going to be the large-scale privatisation, transferring educational institutions to the private sector, they were looking for some lesser versions of that, for instance, that the educational administration shouldn't necessarily be in the hands of the state, you see? He promoted that.

19: We oppose this because there's a reason and a basis for our opposition. The central issue is that the state is the one that has to direct, no? Education, in this specific case. The state cannot abdicate its responsibilities to transfer them to other institutions.

21. *(Int.) So it's an opposition almost in principle?*

22. In principle, that's it. Because, look, the new law of education says, in effect, that private businesses should also contributed to the aims of national development. The question is whether [these businesses] will have enough time to dedicate.... to contribute to the improvement of our country's development. I don't think so. They

don't.

22: So the State is the one that has to direct, because education, health and infrastructure are central issues for the State, that the private sector will definitely not do. The State is the one that's called to contribute to the country's development with its policies. So for us, this role is one where the State directs, which is not limited to education policies, but has to do fundamentally with economic policies. During Fujimori's [government] the State takes on a mostly subsidiary role. So here's where our discrepancy, our distaste, lies, it's here where the contradiction is.

24: *(Int.) So more than an opposition to concrete elements of Fujimori's education reform is an opposition to the basic conception....*

25: Of what the public school is, for instance.

26: *(Int.) Of what's the State and public schooling?*

27: Naturally. For us the State has a central role, a directing role in the field of education. That is why we haven't questioned, for instance, the fact that teachers were trained during the time of Fujimori. What we have question is that they didn't do it well. [...] the MED left [things] in the hands of NGO's. NGO's that were created only for that purpose...

32: *(Int.) Would you be willing to consider some more balanced versions of the state that are being promoted nowadays... where it's not a matter of having a merely subsidiary state, but nor is it a matter of having an entirely provider state...?*

33: No.

35: No because that also lends itself for the State to abdicate its responsibility. And you know what, without being eminently Statist, because maybe you're going to think that that's what I am, but... the great examples in terms of education which have allowed for the existence of great projects, have been promoted by the State. Whether we like it or not, no? With this I'm not saying, for instance, that we should end with private schooling, no, I'm not an extreme enemy of private schooling. Private schools are there because the public school is in decline. If public schools are improved, private schools will automatically disappear. So... for me things are clear: while the State evades its responsibility, that space will undoubtedly be filled by the private sector.

39: *(Int.) And what's your position in relation to the arguments that are used to justify this more subsidiary role of the State, which suggests that the Peruvian State doesn't have enough resources to comply with that providing role, and therefore has to resort to the private sector....*

40: In that argument the truth is not being said. If we begin from the point of view of the economy, of the budget, and there's no money, there's no budget to improve educational quality – because that's the central argument that is used to open the door to the private sector – then let's make efforts, from the state, from the government, to really prioritize education policies in the budget. Why is it that we don't do that?

43: Why do I talk about complacency and complicity? Because officials are not concerned with improving the really low quality administration. But I am certain that the scarce funds that the State has for education are lost because of that. Because there's not an adequate use of those resources, no? So, to use the technical term, they don't know how to optimise the scant resources we have.

49: This government – so that you understand me well and don't get confused – we qualify it, we catalogue it, we characterise it as a continuation of the Neo Liberal model. There might be some nuances, which I recognise, I'm not saying this one's exactly the same as Fujimori's in educational matters, not at all, that would be crazy. At least this government has characterised itself for saying things as they are... what Fujimori hid.

49: So there are some nuances there that make them different, but in essence, in essence, the World Bank and the IMF, the general policies of this government, are aimed, also in the field of education, don't forget it, to privatization. I see that very clearly.

52: Well, it's very relative, it's very weak to say that there's effectively a democratisation in the field of education. What has existed, at some point, is, let's say, an opening to listen to our thought and to that of other sectors, like the parents, universities, I don't know. But in essence the current education policy privileges the government's decisions, no? That can be seen in various concrete events.

52: Although the transition government, when Marcial Rubio was minister, allowed us to participate in the elaboration of a project for directing the contest for naming teachers, where that commission gathered our points of view, Mr. Lynch gets in during Toledo's government and he simply didn't listen to us at all. So where's the democratisation process, no?

There's no sustained or clear policy in terms of a democratisation process.

53: I'm not opposed to assessment, although the media, probably because of vested interests, portray us as a Union that is opposed to assessment, that's a lie. We are conscious that assessment is something inherent to our profession, and we cannot oppose assessment. But they want to expose us to a kind of assessment that is explicitly prepared to sanction, to punish, to fire [teachers]. That's a different thing.

53: There haven't been any efforts, in spite of the existence of the National Council for Education - were, incidentally, our Union doesn't have a representative – up to now we don't have a great policy, which is the national education project, which should precisely point to our North, in order to tell us what kind of education we want in Peru in the next ten years for instance.

60: I can tell, it's because on the side of the government there doesn't exist this responsibility and this decision, a political will of wanting to do things in social sectors as important as education, health and infrastructure. That policy doesn't exist. It doesn't. There are other vested interests.

63: At some point it could have been said that there was a reticent attitude on our part, that was probably true at some point. But that was years ago. When we questioned Velasco's reform, for instance, it was for a lot of reasons, because that reform, being highly important, contrary to the Neo Liberal reform, at that time they made the same usual mistake, which was to exclude us teachers, and to consider us only as mere instruments for the application of the reform. But not this time, we've had the best disposition.

For instance, we have a proposal for the national education project. And I don't mean that our proposal is the best, that it's the solution, or the key that education requires. I don't want to be so pedantic in this terrain. However, it's a proposal that should be discussed with other actors.

But in the end, when the budget, for instance, is discussed, the ugly duckling of the budget is the education sector, isn't it? Because the finance minister, I don't know whom he is listening to, I have the impression that he doesn't listen to president Toledo, but that he listens to the recommendations of international organisations like the World Bank and the IMF, and that's what prevails in the end.

68: *(Int.) It's interesting because sometimes it would seem that this is a debate between groups that have theoretical conceptions of the role of the state, that are almost irreconcilable, and until that opposition is not solved, it will be difficult that the different groups agree on one proposal, no?*

69: But even in their view of the role of the State, it has always been said, for instance, that the State doesn't intervene in the economy, in production, etc. that it should limit itself to social sectors, but not even that. This is different to the privatization of public enterprises, of electricity, which, incidentally, has been privatised. We're only talking about education. Well, at least they should be consistent with their fundamental conception... but not even that.

72: there's people and sectors that are interested in confronting us, the teachers, our Union, with public opinion and with the parents. On the basis of expressions such as that we do not contribute to education, and that we're guilty of the terrible quality of education in our country, and that we're a Union that is frozen in time, and that, as Lynch says, that we have an arcaic way of thinking.

(...)

75: [Lynch] is not from the left anymore, he has sold himself to the Neo Liberal model, no?

In this case, the narrative identity performed by the interviewee presents a strong identification with a particular discourse on the role of the State which leads to the identification of specific negative forces that the Teacher's Union has to oppose. The narrative contrasts with the previous ones partly because of the focus of the interview itself, which was not specifically set on the interviewee's experiences – as he was not a policy maker - but rather on his views about the policy process and his

understanding of the ways in which education policy making has been led during the period under study. Still, the interview has been considered relevant for this analysis as it offers a point of comparison with the previous ones and gives some indications as to the problems faced in the broader dialogue about education policies.

Two main issues can be distinguished in the narrative. The first is a reading that identifies a strong Neo Liberal influence in education policies and associates it with the pressures and presence of international agencies. In this reading, the general trends in economic policies since the early nineties are seen to set the direction of policies in the field of education. Furthermore, although the reading recognises certain differences between Fujimori's and Toledo's government, the prevalence of a Neo Liberal influence is strongly distinguished in both. The description of neoliberalism highlights its conception of the state as having a subsidiary role in the economy and society. In education, this is allegedly leading to increasing privatisation of public education services and an open attempt to disempower the teachers by promoting school-based and more localised decision-making.

The second main issue that can be identified in the narrative, and which is more specifically related to the identity of the Teacher's Union – as represented by one of its main leaders- is the depiction of the Union as a flexible, non-radical and open organisation. In this case, the interviewee seems to be talking to certain not-so-ghostly audiences which in his view insist on the radical stance of the Union as a way of discrediting its participation in the democratic dialogue on education policies.

The reading of the reality of education policy is highly articulated and has a clearly identifiable theory. The latter is particularly evident when the interviewee is questioned about the Union's position in relation to the role of the state, which is the source of major discrepancies with governments. The conception that emerges from this is that of a monolithic central state which is opposed to any form of non-hierarchichal decision-making and provision, even if it stems from a discourse on the need to democratise both education and policy-making, as has been the case in recent years. And although this is not entirely clear in the narrative, it seems that the ideal provider-state is one controlled by the Union itself – the last statement which described minister Lynch as having sold himself to the Neo Liberal model is illustrative of this, as it suggests that any confrontational attitude towards the Union, even coming from a self-declared socialist will be associated with the prevalence of vilified Neo Liberal forces.

Looking at the narrative in more detail, the non-negotiable nature of most of the interviewee's positions in relation to the role of the State in education contrasts with the image of a Union as open to dialogue that the interviewee is trying to convey, comes through especially when compared to the nature of education policies promoted in recent years. First of all, as was shown in the chronology it is difficult to identify a unity in the reforms, which is precisely what discontinuity points to. The presence of a Neo Liberal agenda was much clearer during the first years of Fujimori's government, but policies coherent with this line were later abandoned or at least complemented with a strong emphasis on educational processes that does not entirely fit the Neo Liberal agenda. The prevalence of Neo Liberal education policies has been even less during Toledo's government, in which the emphasis of policies has rather been on democratising decision-making and educational processes, and in which there have been important moves towards incrementing the national budget for education.

In view of the contrast between existing policies and the narrative discourse presented above, it might be relevant to remember that 'the introduction of Neo Liberal economic policies does not necessarily bring about Neo Liberal education policies' (Narodowski and Nores 2003), especially when Neo Liberal policies are conceived as the introduction of market mechanisms in the educational arena. As Narodowski and Nores (2003) suggest in their analysis of policies elsewhere in the Latin American region, it is 'important to avoid reducing the existing complexities to labels such as neoliberalism (...) [which] diminish not only the possibilities for generating viable alternatives, but also limits the extent of the analysis' (p.150). The interviewee in this case, seems to be falling into a reductionism that expresses a closed attitude that glosses over a variety of initiatives under highly ideologised conceptions.

This critical reading notwithstanding, the narrative is especially interesting as it gives an idea of the positions from which the dialogue about education policy is approached by such an important organisation as the Teacher's Union, which, as seen in the chronology, has the capacity to block policies and even jeopardise governmental stability - as was the case during the 2002 strike which led to the first of the cabinet reshufflings in Toledo's government. The Union's rigid position has led some to qualify the organisation as being conservative and reactionary (Lynch 2003), as it opposes any kind of changes in education and the institutional matrix for policy making – any changes, that is, which might challenge the Union's clientelistic power structure and control of the system of decision-making by giving more autonomy to

communities and schools. This is an image that questions the allegedly radical (i.e. pro-change) nature of the Teachers Union's positions.

12.5 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The individual analysis of the narratives has focused on the identities performed by each of the interviewees and how this reflects their understanding and approach to policy making. In all cases it was possible to identify a strong tension between the individuals who narrate their experience and 'others' who are contested in order to construct their identity. These 'others' range from members of the opposition, the dictatorial government of Fujimori, the education community, groups with vested interests that carry out orchestrated campaigns, international agencies, etc. Such tensions and contrasts are at the core of the narratives, and those 'others' stand as the 'ghostly audiences' (Langellier 2001) to which the narratives speak.

Contestation appears to be a fundamental aim of the narratives. It is the basis for the articulation of more positive self-identities on the part of the policy makers, who portray themselves as victims or heroes in the battle against the ghosts or, rather, onetime enemies that 'blocked' their actions. In the first case the interviewees portrayed themselves as technocrats fighting against the stagnation of the bureaucracy and the corruption of the government and the political system; at the same time, they performed an identity as highly innovative and creative policy makers. In the second case the confrontation with the narratives' 'others' is even more explicit, and the interviewee portrays himself as a bold and daring individual who had the nerve to face and fight those groups that were opposed to a 'democratic' education policy. In the fourth case, the narrative positions the interviewee as a victim who, having had access to power (closeness to the president) and knowledge of how to do things, had to face an orchestrated campaign that was the product of vested interests from political groups wanting to undermine the government's legitimacy. The final narrative speaks about an institutional identity, that of the Teacher's Union, which stands as a fundamental interlocutor in the policy process. Although at one level the interviewee is trying to convey an image of flexibility and openness, the narrative reveals very fixed conceptions of the state and its role in national development, as well as a rigid attitude towards dialogue in policy making.

The tension and contrasts between policy makers and those 'others' who appear in the narratives are at the basis of problems in policy deliberation, as radical stances make it difficult to sustain a more deliberative attitude in policy making. Identities appear to be hard-wired and non-negotiable, so deliberation is difficult. Policy makers, each in their own particular way seem to own the truth, a truth that is non-negotiable. In this context, deliberation is merely a step for convincing others or winning consent for the application of policies, rather than an ongoing process involving the thorough discussion of alternatives and desired courses of action, which, should also include considerations about things that have already been done by previous administrations and how to improve them. But in each case policy makers seem to be reinventing the education policy arena, putting the stress on things that in their view are necessary, without the least concern for continuity or for guaranteeing some degree of institutional learning that might grant improvements in the long term.

This can be partly explained by reference to the institutional matrix within which policy makers operate. As policy making careers do not exist as such, and as there is a tendency to short term administrations, each individual seems concerned with imprinting a mark on the policy process: the long term is too far and inaccessible as to grant any personal rewards. But while such an institutional matrix generates such constraints, it is also loose enough to provide policy makers with a strong degree of autonomy. There are little formal and informal demands for policy makers to account for their actions, to take responsibility for the course of policies, and they can thus redefine policy directions continuously.

PART V - CONCLUSIONS

In the opening pages of this work, discontinuity was presented as a severe problem in Peruvian education policies. It was suggested that constant changes in discourses, programmes and policy making teams were some of the central factors contributing to the stagnation of Peruvian education. The research questions aimed to understand the sources of discontinuity, as well as its overall meaning. With this in mind, the notion of discontinuity, which, as suggested initially, appeared as a taken for granted (or obvious) element of policy making, and which in the case of Peru acquired deep and worrying levels, has been then destabilised in various ways. The explorations of the subject have followed two complementary lines of analysis: one that focused on issues of state development and the role of education, and one that focused on the process of policy making in education.

A discussion of various perspectives on the state suggested the need to analyse state capacities in relation to historical developments. The issues of state autonomy and legitimacy appeared as fundamental elements in this analysis. This perspective was then used to analyse developments in the Peruvian state. It was shown how post-colonial state development took place without a deep modification of the social structure, which maintained the strong inequalities on which colonial domination was based, merely replacing it with what has been described as a form of internal colonialism. The operation of the state in this context was partly geared to maintain such inequalities, responding to the demands of a small but powerful minority. This limited a more homogeneous spread of civil rights and inhibited the formation of a stronger middle class capable of exerting pressure over the state for better deliverance of policies.

Not being articulated to a more egalitarian process of state development, public education has played a paradoxical role. While at one level it is undeniably linked to the extension of civil rights, it appears to do this in a way that reproduces existing social inequalities – an idea that comes across in the notion that public education in Peru is an ‘education for the poor’. In this sense, the Peruvian case reinforces the view that the problems faced by education systems can be read in terms of the contradictions found at the core of the state, which has to comply with opposing demands (Dale 1989). In the case of the Peruvian state – which shares similar traits to other states in the region and in other parts of the post-colonial world – such contradictions situate public education in a paradoxical position, as both an enhancer

and limiter of the possibilities of more egalitarian social conditions. The extension of civil rights that comes through the massification of education is curtailed by the low quality of public education, which keeps a vast majority of the population in conditions of exclusion.

This reading frames the analysis of discontinuity. The latter can be understood as a problem that has to do both with the weakness of the Peruvian state, and with the role that public education has played in its development. Policy discontinuity has to do with the limitations of a state that has developed without a fundamental articulation between its institutions and the society in which it operates – a situation that limits both its legitimacy and its autonomy, and weakens its executive capacities. This can be explained by the lack of a more articulated development of state and society, where state institutions have come to existence through a process of importation or imposition from above (see Kobrin 1999; Touraine 1998), rather than as a consequence of, or together with, social changes. The development of a modern state in Peru (in terms of its institutions and functions) has not been matched by social developments – i.e. by a more homogeneous spread of civil rights (O'Donnell 1998). This, as was discussed, creates a fundamental distance between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic dimensions of social action which, in this case, translate into a looseness of formal constraints on policy making. The weak articulation between state and society means also that there is limited pressure on the state for the effective application of social policies, such as those of education.

To sum up these ideas, it can be said that both the lack of articulation between public education and state development, and the weakness of the institutional apparatus of the state, stem from the same problem of unequal state and society development. In this context, the problem of discontinuity can be understood partly as a problem of the role that public education has played (historically) in the development of the Peruvian state, and partly as a problem of the institutional apparatus of the state and its incapacity to deliver social policies. The latter is both a problem of the process machinery of the state, and one of the cultures of policy making that have emerged in it and help reproduce its dynamics. It is also a problem that appears to be exacerbated in a context permeated by a neo-liberal political economy, in which the state stands in an ambiguous position in terms of its responsibilities in relation to the improvement of social conditions and of the openness to deliberation in policy making (Lauder 1997)⁹¹.

⁹¹ Lauder (1997) has a strong argument that shows that the 'neo-liberal political economy licenses an authoritarian approach to politics' (p.282) – an idea supported by the interview data presented in

Such problems link back to the role of education in Peruvian state development, as discontinuity – which prevails in other policy sectors – appears to be higher in education due both to the long term (and therefore apparently less pressing) rhythms in which changes take place in education, and to the lack of articulation of public education to national development. Of course, this latter idea is not overtly discussed, and is rather contradicted in political discourses which locate education as one of the country's main priorities, as otherwise serious questions of discrimination could be raised. In this sense the question of discontinuity opens up to similar issues to those highlighted by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2003) in charge of investigating the acts of political violence that took place during the eighties and early nineties, and which portrayed an alarming picture of Peru as a country in which those in the most privileged socio-economic positions systematically turn their backs on the most needed. The idea that public education in Peru is an 'education for the poor' suggests that the public education system is geared to exclude and to maintain existing social inequalities.

In this context, the application of education policies often falls into a vacuum, which is partly to account for the high levels of discontinuity. If public education is an education for those who are excluded, for those who do not matter, for the country's 'imaginary citizens' (Lopez 1997), then inaction in this sector is of little consequence for the country. Of course I am not saying that this should be so, not only because of the ethical issues it raises, but also because keeping vast majorities of the population in conditions of exclusion has consequences for the country's possibilities of social and economic development. The problem is that changing this would require some fundamental structural changes in the constitution of Peruvian society – for instance, in terms of the development of a class of users of public education capable of exerting pressure over the state for better delivery of social policies. Discontinuity, then, speaks not only of state incapacities or weaknesses (i.e. in terms of its institutions), but also of structural problems in the relations between state and society in Peru, and more specifically between the state and education.

These are the theoretical considerations that have framed, guided and evolved throughout the research. They have been extensively explored in Part III, where a discussion of various approaches to theorising the state led to a position in which considering specific paths to state development became a pressing need. This

previous pages, where the period in which a neo-liberal economic programme was strongest coincided with a technocratic approach to policy-making that was far from democratic practices.

perspective was then used to analyse the characteristics of the Peruvian state, which were later linked to the role of public education.

Having set the ground for understanding the structural problems that explain policy discontinuity, the final chapter in Part III moved on to a more detailed consideration of policy making processes. The idea here was to set up a theoretical ground for understanding the 'cultures of policy making' that were then presented in Part IV. This chapter also set the basis for some final considerations about policy making that help the analysis of discontinuity by focusing on more specific aspects of the problem which have to do with the operation of the policy making apparatus and the political system. Discontinuity in this context, speaks of a largely undemocratic approach to policy making, which is far from any process of giving reasons and inviting responses (Barnett 2003). As a consequence of the loose institutional framework in which they operate, policy makers can appropriate decision making spaces almost absolutely, defining and redefining policy directions at will, often in accordance to merely idiosyncratic criteria.

In relation to these issues, the first part of the analysis of the interview data focused on the institutional context of policy making. The limits of the bureaucracy appeared as a central element, as a lack of public service career and of clear mechanisms for entering, leaving or being promoted in the public sector give way to the imposition of more clientelistic criteria. The bureaucracy then appeared as one of pacts or temporary alliances, but not as a system capable of structuring and sustaining policies over time. This, moreover, seriously limits the possibilities of institutional learning, as institutional experience and memory are constantly wiped out. Bureaucratic limitations were matched by the limitations imposed by an intricate legal system, which often limits the possibilities of applying policies in more efficient ways, and promotes efforts to by-pass the law.

These problems are further deepened by the lack of a better articulated set of policies in the public sector, which hinders coordination and the application of policies. This lack of articulation has to do with the weaknesses of the Peruvian party political system, which is dominated by independent movements and seems incapable of coming up with coherent government proposals that could guide the actions of policy makers as well as the coordination between different sectors of public administration. In education this lack of directionality is even deeper, largely, it was suggested, because of the ambiguous role that public education plays in national development.

In this context, international funding agencies were seen to play an ambiguous role. In view of the local incapacity to come up with more coherent policy directions – partly because of the discontinuities in policy making teams – there is a tendency to appropriate the proposals of such agencies. The latter, however, tend to fall into a vacuum and miss the possibility of becoming articulated with long term policies. Furthermore, international agencies, by focusing on specific areas and programmes tend to overlook problems at the level of policy and reform management, and their efforts are thus often lost amidst prevailing discontinuities.

As was seen through the data analysis, especially in the narrative analysis of interviews, policy makers speak as if they had total ownership of the spaces of political representation. Constrained by only weak formal institutional mechanisms, and bound rather by the more informal clientelistic and feudal patterns of relationship, they colonise the spaces of policy making in education as long as they are in positions of power. In this sense, their discourses can be seen as ‘expressions of identity’, rather than ‘mediums for the re-making of identities’ (Barnett 2003:20), that is for the permanent reformulation of what needs to be done in the policy arena as to better satisfy social needs and demands. To some extent the problem seems one of creating better institutions to bind policy makers and hold them to account for their actions. This would also require the development of more horizontal forms of accountability (O'Donnell 2002; 1999) as to create a ‘culture’ of policy making tied to both formal and informal binding mechanisms.

Speaking about binding actions and decisions is not, of course, to be equated with the determination of uncontestable policies and policy aims. It refers rather to the opening of decision making processes to a space of permanent conversation/deliberation about the direction of policies. A kind of public sphere, to use Habermas’ term, but one that is not defined by the presence of unchangeable policies, but rather marked by the presence of permanent conflict and contestation, as well as by a relationship of accountability between policy makers and the public for whom they are supposed to act. In this context, ‘deliberative speech is not the property of any individual or collective subject (as it indeed appeared to be in the policy narratives), but is the subject-less medium for the contingent articulation of political subjectivity’ (Barnett 2003:21). This is a process which, on the other hand, is neither to be equated with an agonistic politics of permanent change, but which is tied to the more pragmatic aim of delivering policies and wellbeing.

Deliberation as *the* fundamental element of policy making is thus tied to a conception of representation that is quite far from notions of consensus building that seem to

permeate new proposals for education policy making based on strong participatory mechanisms (i.e. the new law of education), and which are based on a conception of identity as presence, that is, as something that is definite, speakable and permanent. Contrary to these views, the conception of policy making advanced here assumes that 'practices of deliberation, debate, and representation are not understood as expressions of identity or will, but as a medium for the remaking of identities' (Barnett 2003). In this sense, deliberative processes in policy making, should be related to the aim of developing better policies by enhancing relations between the state and citizens. Of course consensus building has a role to play in all this, as a minimal guiding framework and agreements are fundamental to direct policies. But rather than a rational consensus in which differences are homogenised, it is one that is open to contestation and reformulation.

Such an approach to policy making contrasts markedly with what was discussed in the narrative analysis of policy discourses, which showed how policy makers operate on the basis of non-negotiable identities, that are constructed in opposition to the also definite identities of 'others' such as 'the opposition', 'the critics', 'the education community'. This reveals a lack of disposition towards dialogue that is opposed to notions of deliberation as one of the fundamentals of democratic government (Barnett 2003) – the latter being a form of politics that 'takes the form of a call that anticipates a response from the people whose identity is invoked in the descriptive register, a response that takes the form of subsequent authorisation and calling to account' (Barnett 2003). This view of democracy as a form of deliberative politics entails a process of permanent translation that leads to the 'articulation of promises, giving reasons, and a willingness to talk and listen' (Barnett 2003:63). It contrasts markedly to the cultures of policy making examined in the data analysis section, where, in spite of the difference between the policy makers narratives, each narrative suggested an image of the policy process in which individuals appropriate the space for policy making and reject the need to both give reasons and invite responses.

Policy discontinuity thus signals a form of indetermination (of what needs to be done in education) that is profoundly undemocratic, as it implies no commitment to binding decisions, no responsibility for social needs and no commitment to account. Rather than the indetermination that comes from the exposure of ideas and decisions to public scrutiny, it is one that stems from a political system in which the links between policy makers and citizens are very weak (Suma Ciudadana 2003), and where the former are only loosely compelled to assume responsibility for their actions.

'Politics is frequently associated today with self-seeking behaviour, hypocrisy and 'public relations' activity geared to selling policy packages. The problem with this view is that, while it is quite understandable, the difficulties of the modern world will not be solved by surrendering politics, but only by the development and transformation of 'politics' in ways that enable us more effectively to shape and organize human life' (Held 1987)

Having reached the end of this long text, I should hope that the reader will have found that my work is, by and large, coherent with what I now take as my assumptions about the possibility of empiricism, evidence, etc. Throughout the text, however, the reader might have perceived the existence of what I have called a ghost, an underlying assumption or a series of them, which could be linked to a shadow of empiricism in my work. This is a ghost that I am aware of. Any other slips I will have to blame on a blind-eye to the persistence of this and other ghosts and to the situatedness of my knowledge, which, however much I reflect upon, I will never be able to overcome (see Rose 1997).

The ghost I am talking about is that of 'finding order', of 'doing things right' in the education policy arena. It is a kind of Apolinean principle (in the Nietzschean sense), that keeps imposing itself over my commitment to 'the flow of ideas', or to the impossibility of defining things in definite ways, which stems from my closeness to post-structuralist views. I think that, using Derrida's term, here lies the *aporia* on which my research hinges – the moment of perplexity, impossibility and undecidability, the moment of doubt which is inherent in any real decision. It might be an *aporia* that, as a ghost, haunts all of us who, having assumed the impossibility of an uninterpreted relation to the world, still propose to do certain things, in certain ways, guided not by "Truth", but by some kind of normative (but at the same time contestable, provisional, negotiable) notion of the 'good life'.

To some extent, my willingness to compromise or engage in some sort of search for orderliness – in policy making in this case – has to do with a move away from what in many cases resembles the 'intellectual comfort' that philosopher Paul Ricoeur criticised in some of his fellow French intellectuals, who were often caught in positions of permanent confrontation or denunciation, without daring to move towards a much necessary re-symbolisation of the political realm (Ricoeur June 2005).

In my case, this *aporia* translates into a certain desire or commitment that can be perceived at many points in the text, that things *should* change in the Peruvian education policy arena, that they *should* move in a certain direction (towards being more democratic for instance). This direction is that of orderliness, of a system in which policy makers should be more constrained or committed to give reasons for their actions and invite responses from other actors, a system where people cannot do whatever they want, whenever they want, where actors can engage in a permanent dialogue but also agree on the need to come up with binding decisions (Barnett 2003).

So, while acknowledging that any new discourse, any decision, consensus or settlement over something will inaugurate a new series of power relations, of normalising discourses with potentially excluding consequences, my thoughts on education policy *aporetically* move towards the need for decision, for settlement, for some kind of orderliness, albeit of a non-foundational or totalising character. With this *aporia* I am willing to live.

My position comes not only from an understanding about the impossibility to overcome the *aporia* that is involved in the move from 'undecidability to decision' (Critchley 1999a), or from the move away from the 'intellectual comfort' of permanent denunciation, but also from a more personal experience. Coming from a country like Peru, I think it is almost impossible to look at the political system – if it can be called a system at all – without developing some kind of commitment to some form of orderliness, even if this imposes a new set of power relations. The search, of course, is not for some kind of perfect order, but rather a move away from the complete chaos and disorderliness in which our political system is often caught. It is a move away from the prevalence of things like corruption, authoritarian forms of government, or the less legally condemnable, but not less pervasive, everyday abuses of power. In this case, it is a move away from a form of policy making that is full of incoherence and authoritarianism, where policy makers use their *power to do things* in order to impose their will and their views, in a way that leads to a permanent redefinition of things and which leaves many fundamental problems of social and educational equity untouched. The *aporia* on which my research hinges is therefore closely linked to the experiences that I described in the opening chapters and which constitute the source of my motivation to carry out this study. This is my experience working in Peru, in the public sector and as a researcher in education, but also my more fundamental everyday experience as a Peruvian citizen who does not want to 'surrender politics'.

GLOSSARY

- ❖ BIRF – International Reconstruction and Promotion Bank
- ❖ Foro Educativo – civil society organization that gathers educational experts and aims to contribute to the discussion education policies
- ❖ GTZ – German International Development Office
- ❖ IDB – InterAmerican Development Bank
- ❖ IMF – International Monetary Fund
- ❖ Huascarán Programme – Programme for providing technologies and connecting schools developed during the government of Alejandro Toledo.
- ❖ MECEP – Programme for the Improvement of Educational Quality in Peru
- ❖ MED – Ministry of Education of Peru
- ❖ MEF – Ministry of Finance
- ❖ PATRIA ROJA – Extreme leftist political party which holds strong links with the Teacher's Union
- ❖ Peru Posible – President Alejandro Toledo's political party
- ❖ PLANCAD – Teacher training programme during the time of President
- ❖ Sendero Luminoso – Peruvian terrorist movement
- ❖ SUTEP – Peruvian Teachers' Union
- ❖ PLANGED – School management training programme during the time of President Fujimori
- ❖ UNDP – United Nations Development Programme
- ❖ WB – World Bank

WHO'S WHO IN THE INTERVIEWS

- ❖ Domingo Palermo Education minister during the government of Fujimori
- ❖ Absalon Vasquez – former advisor and minister of Fujimori's government who led a faction of the party (therefore the term 'absalonism')
- ❖ Ignacio Garcia Escudero – Education minister during the government of Fujimori
- ❖ Lynch - Education minister during the government of Alejandro Toledo
- ❖ Galli – Garcia Escudero's vice minister
- ❖ Hugo Diaz – National education expert and member of Foro Educativo
- ❖ Alberto Fujimori – Peruvian president between 1990 and 2001
- ❖ Alejandro Toledo – Peruvian president between 2001 and 2006
- ❖ Gorriti (Jose Carlos) – Head of the Secondary and Technical Education Office
- ❖ Pedro Pablo Kuczinski – Finance minister of Toledo's government
- ❖ Marcial Rubio – Minister of Education during the transition government between Fujimori and Toledo
- ❖ Gerardo Ayzanoa – Education minister during the government of Alejandro Toledo
- ❖ Carlos Malpica - Education minister during the government of Alejandro Toledo
- ❖ Javier Sota - Education minister during the government of Alejandro Toledo
- ❖ Juan Abugattas – vice-minister during Nicolas Lynch's administration
- ❖ Cecilia Valenzuela – conductor of a political television programme
- ❖ Leon Trahtemberg – National education expert, member of the National Council for Education

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